

THE ADVENTURES OF PRATAPAN

The Adventures of Pratapan is adapted from Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram, the first novel to be written in Tamil. Till that time, Tamil literature consisted only of poetry.

Written in 1879 by Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai, the story begins with the hero, Pratapan, being completely in love with Jnanam, a woman of great beauty and strength of will. Jnanam returns his feelings. Unfortunately their happiness is marred by the constant bickering of their fathers. The couple is separated and one day, Jnanam goes missing.

Vedanayakam Pillai, influenced by the ideas of women's liberation and secularism, has created a strong female character in Jnanam.

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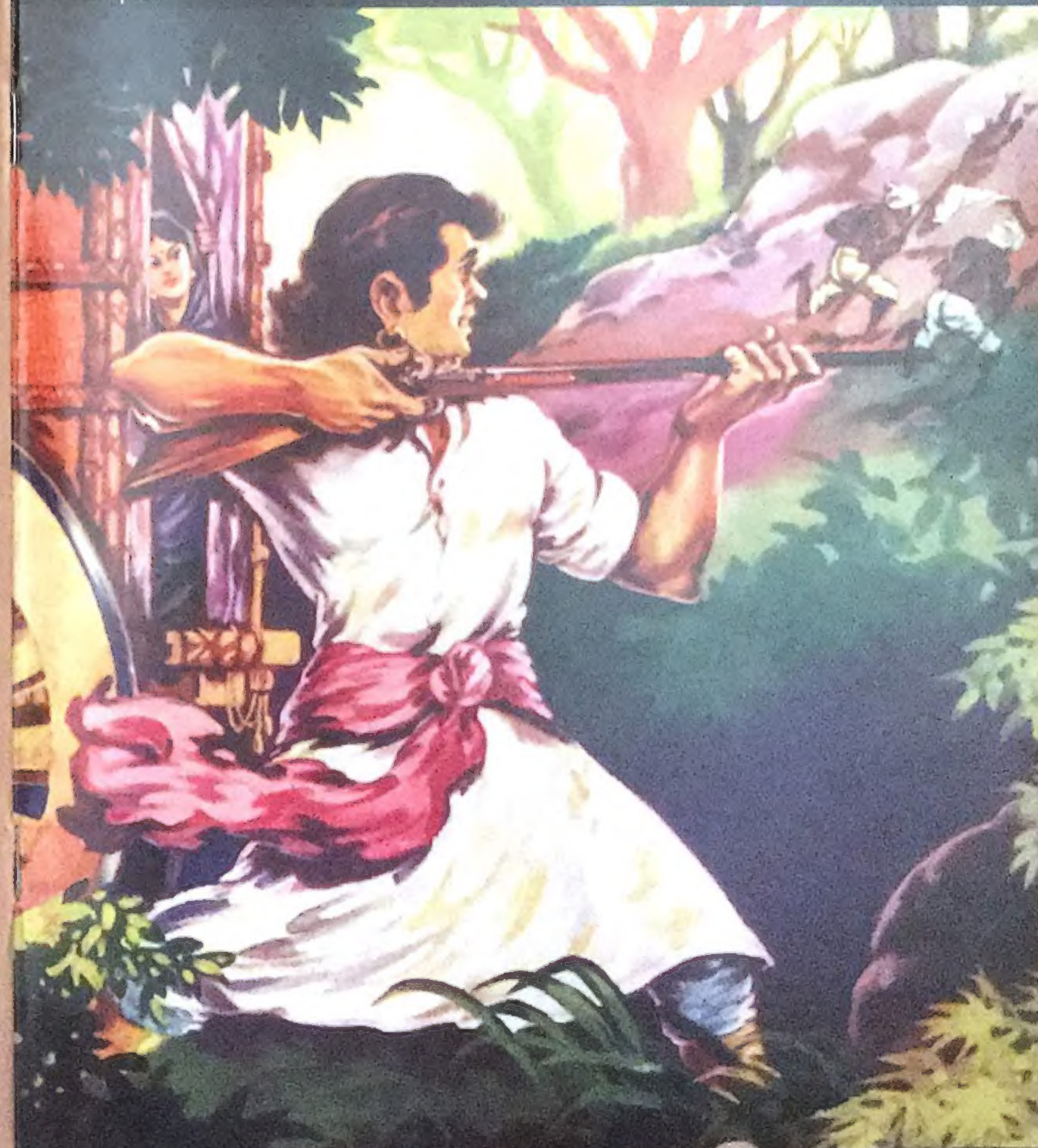
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THE ADVENTURES OF PRATAPAN

AN ADAPTATION OF THE FIRST TAMIL NOVEL

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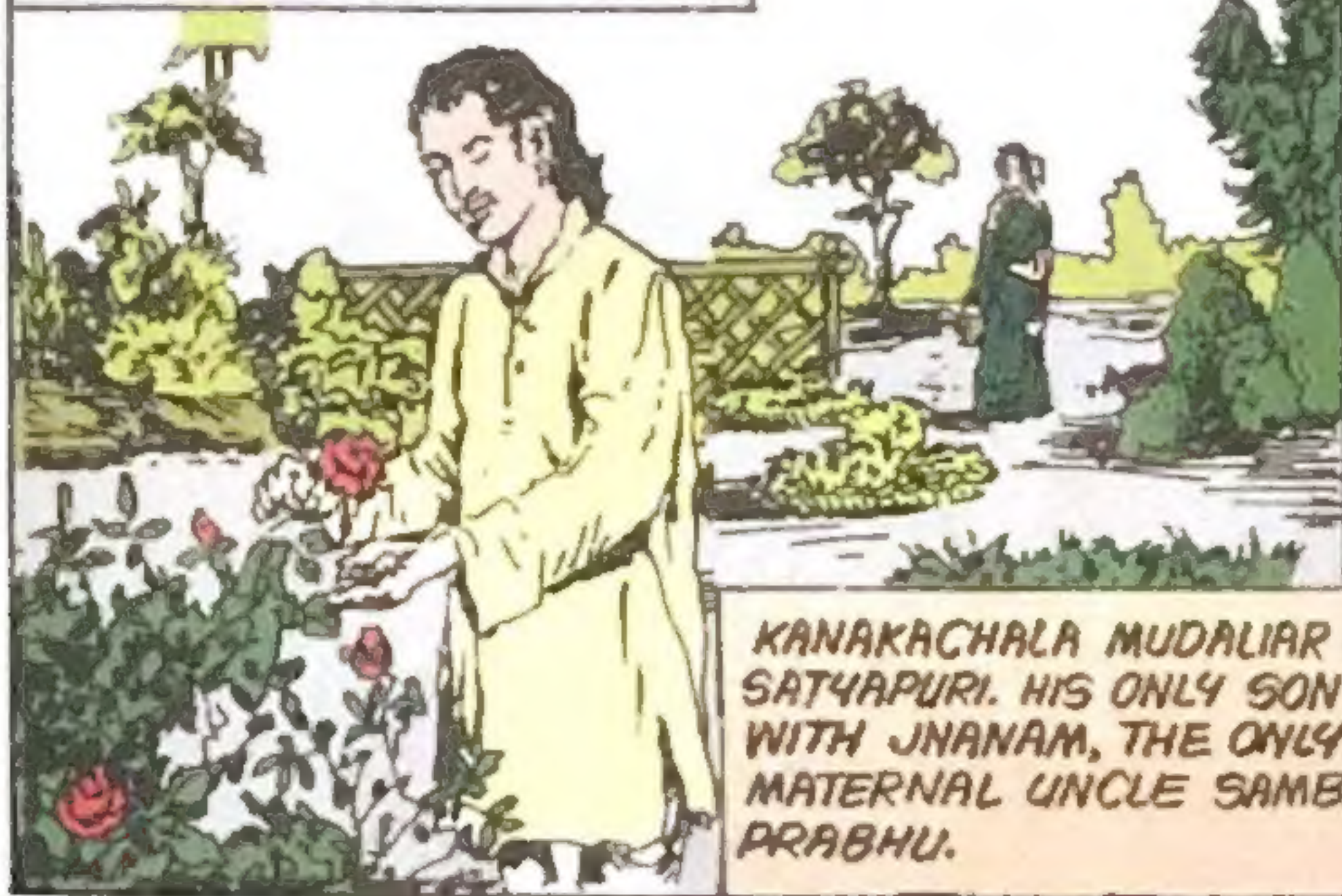


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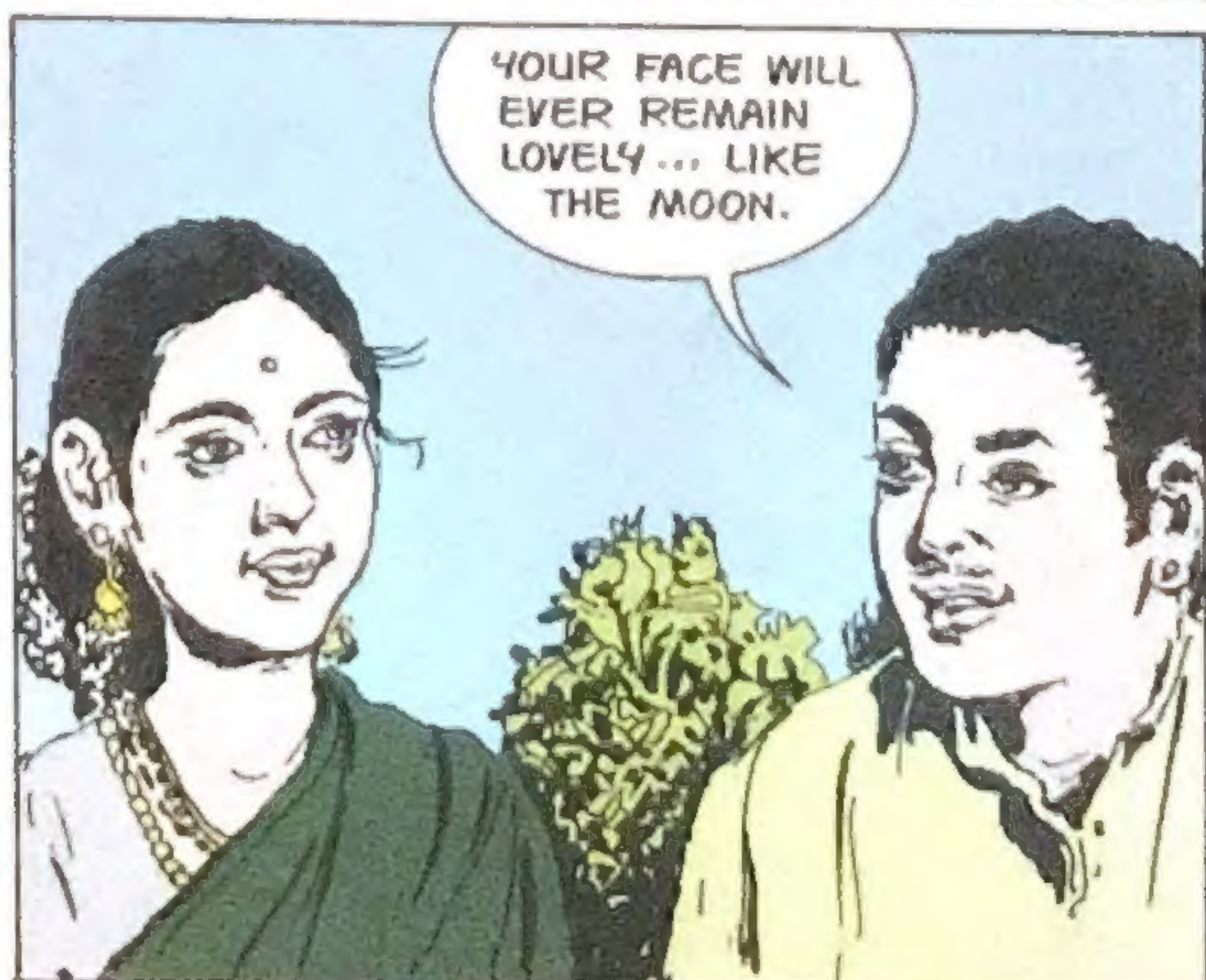
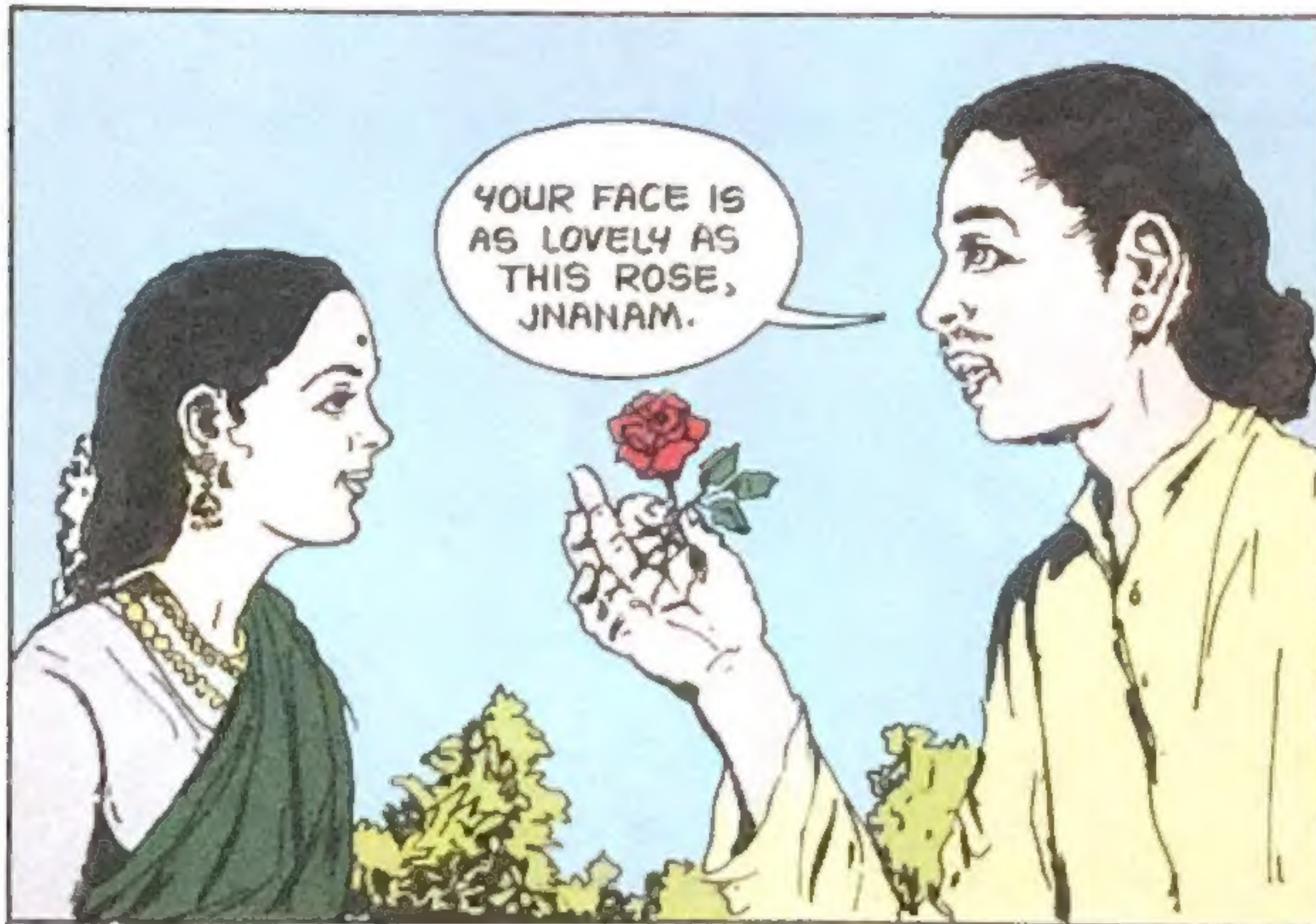
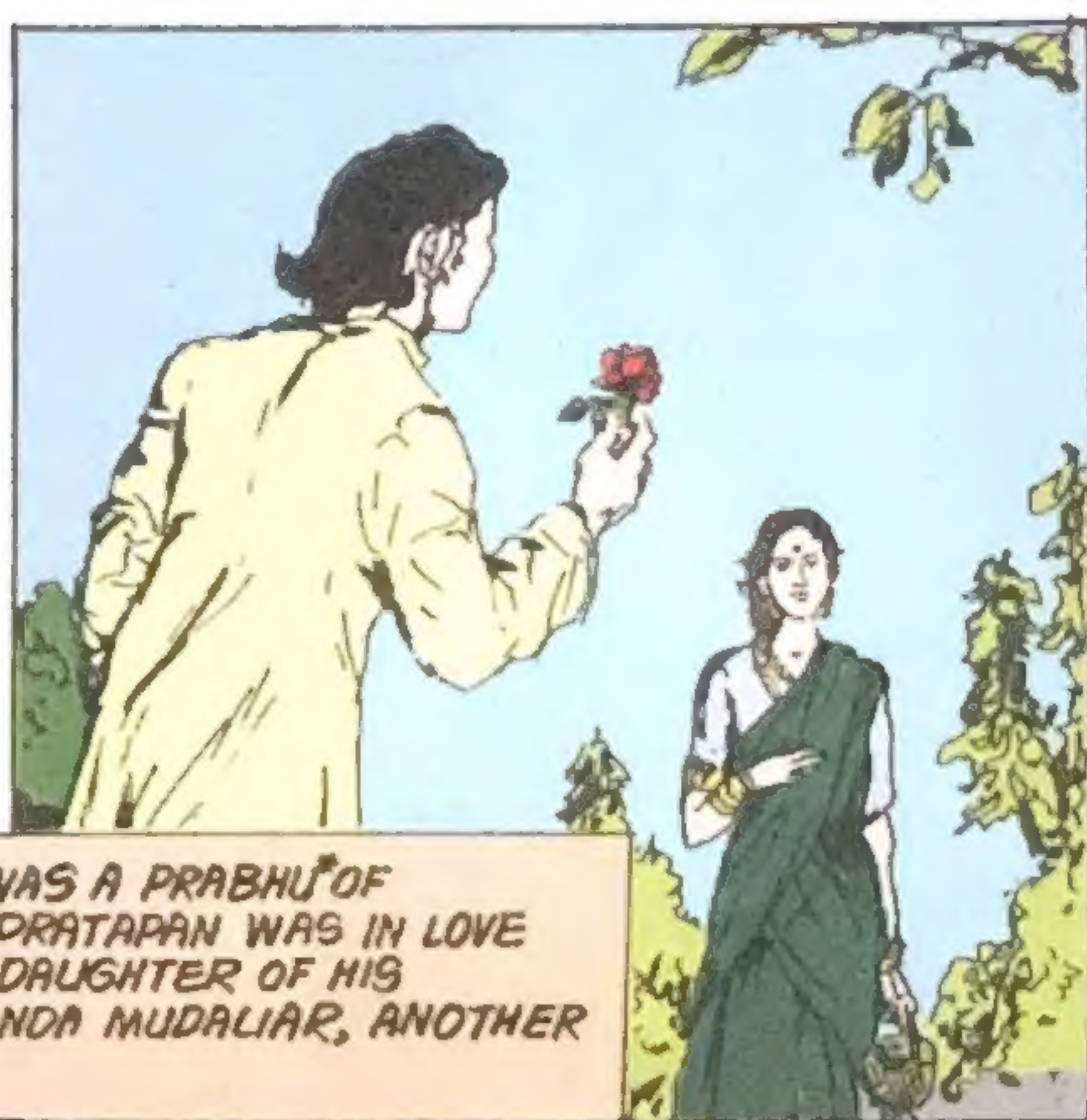


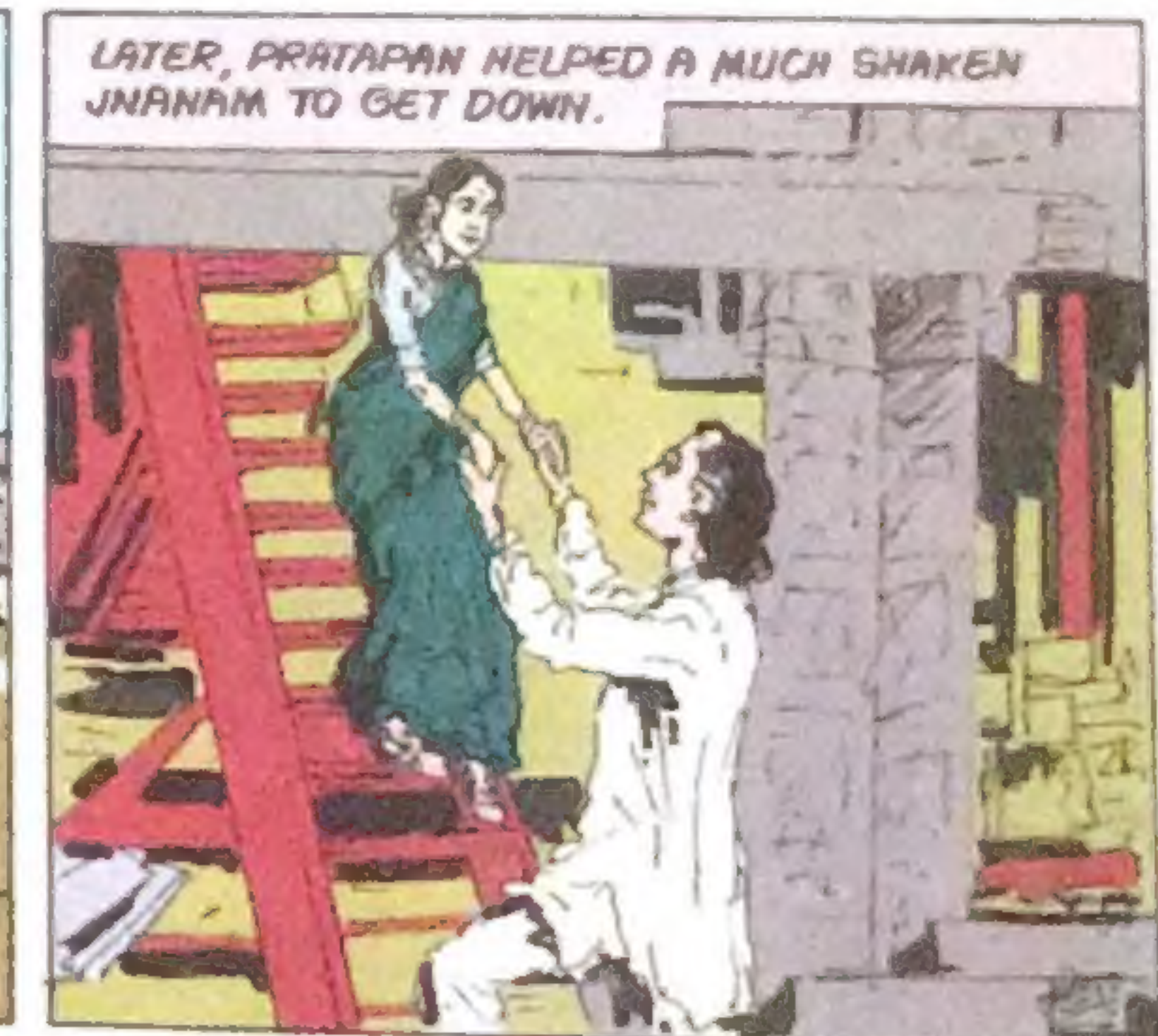
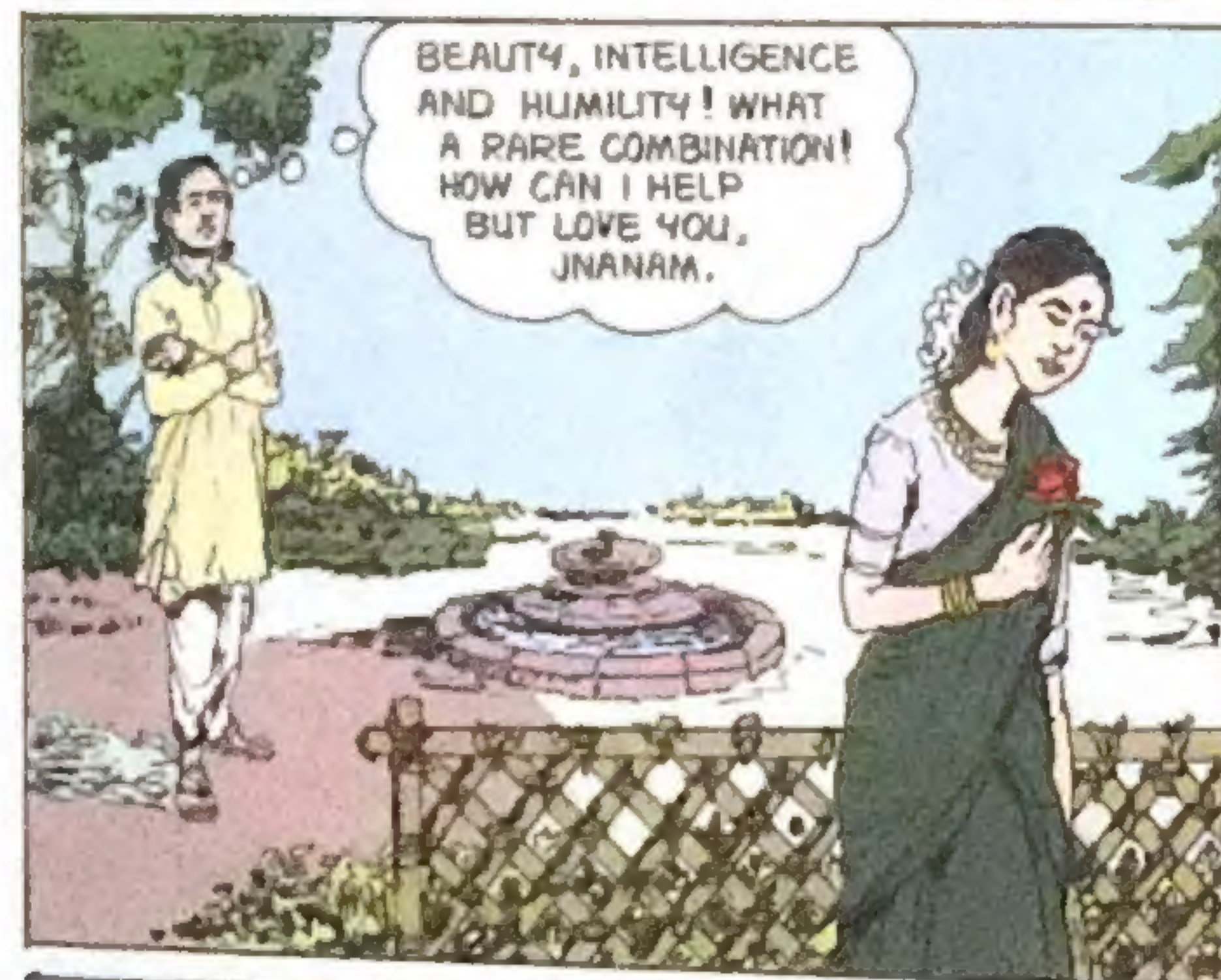
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The Adventures of PRATAPAN

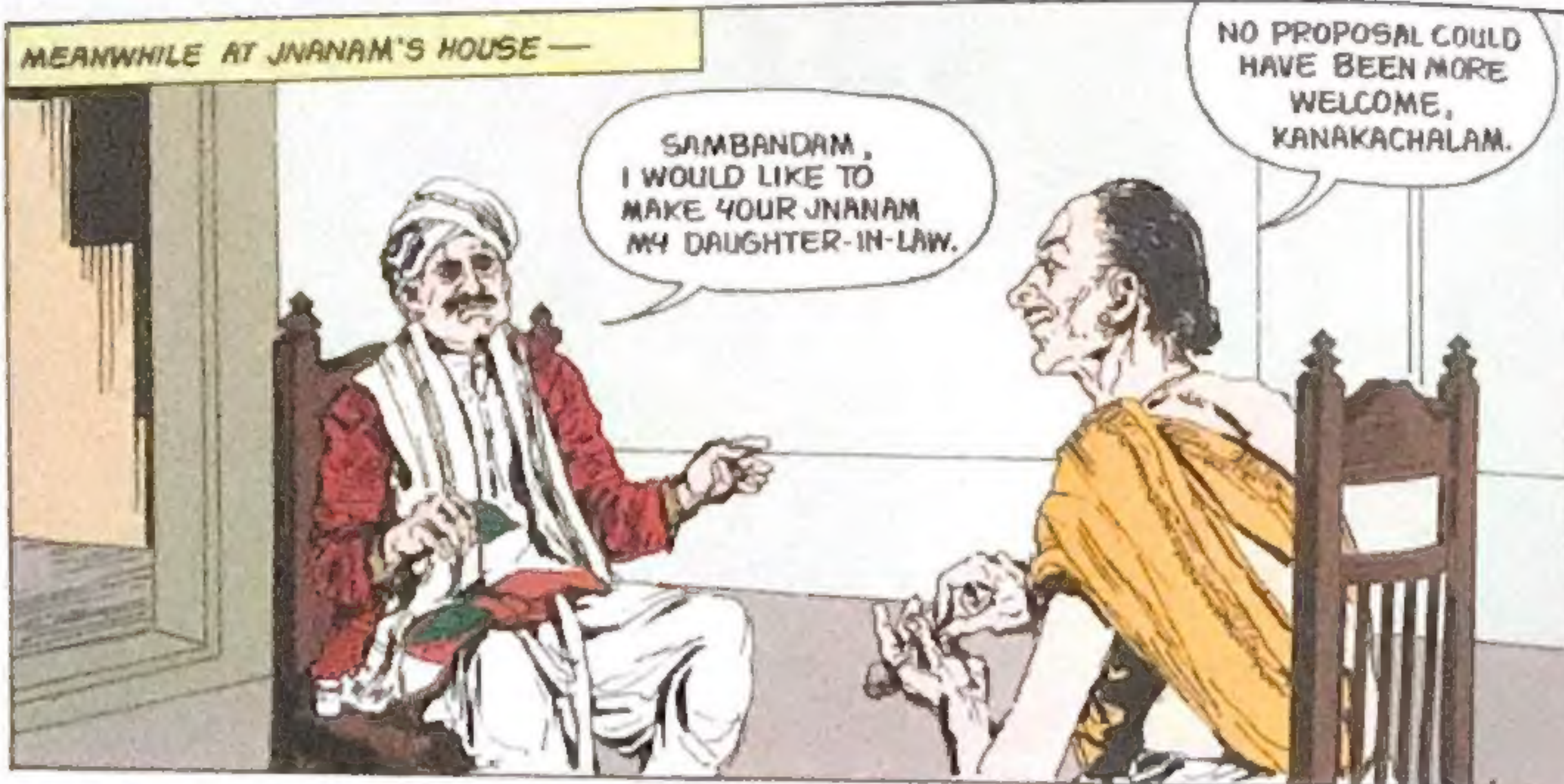


KANAKACHALA MUDALIAR WAS A PRABHU OF SATYAPURI. HIS ONLY SON PRATAPAN WAS IN LOVE WITH JNANAM, THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF HIS MATERNAL UNCLE SAMBANDA MUDALIAR, ANOTHER PRABHU.

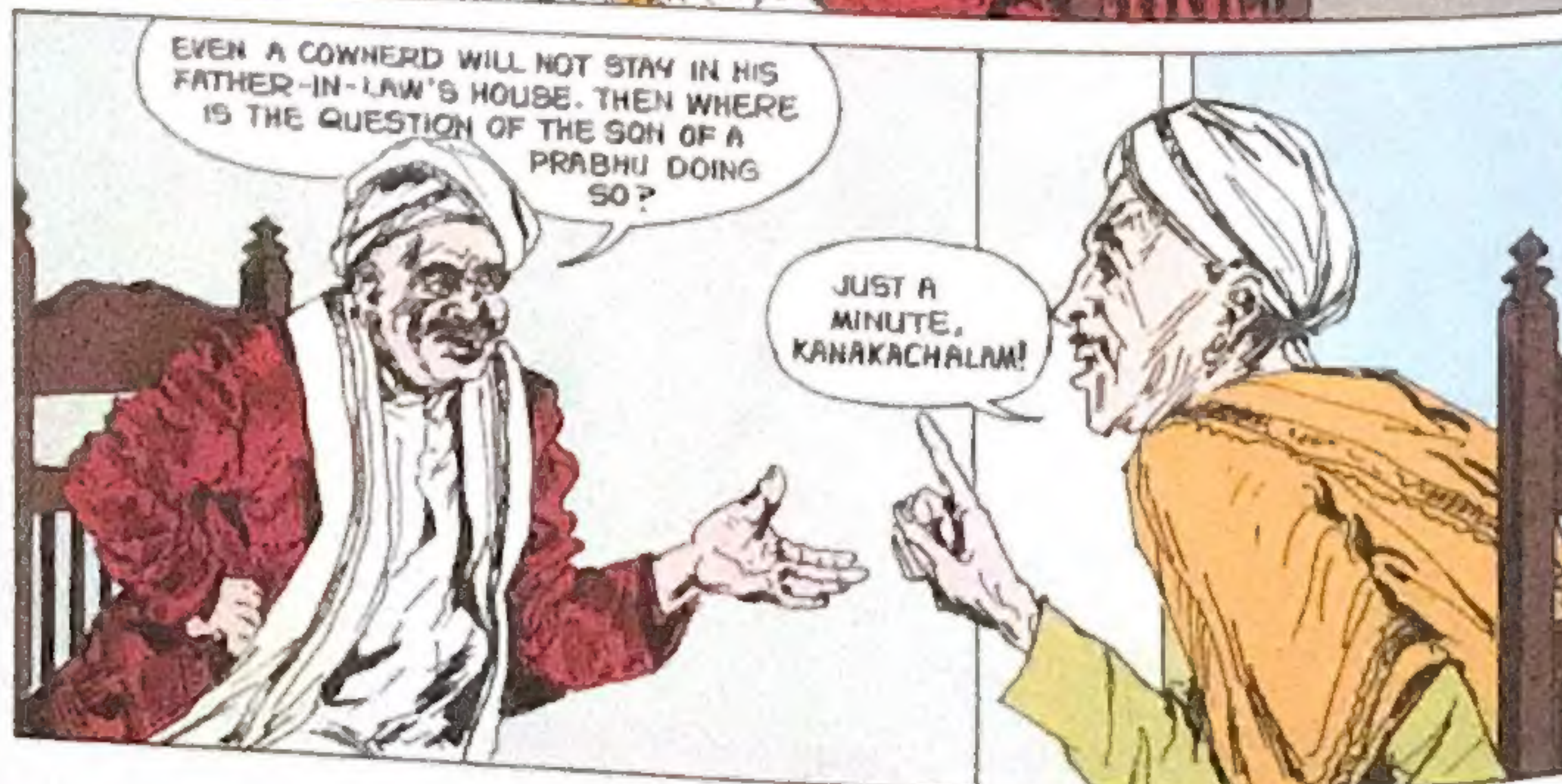
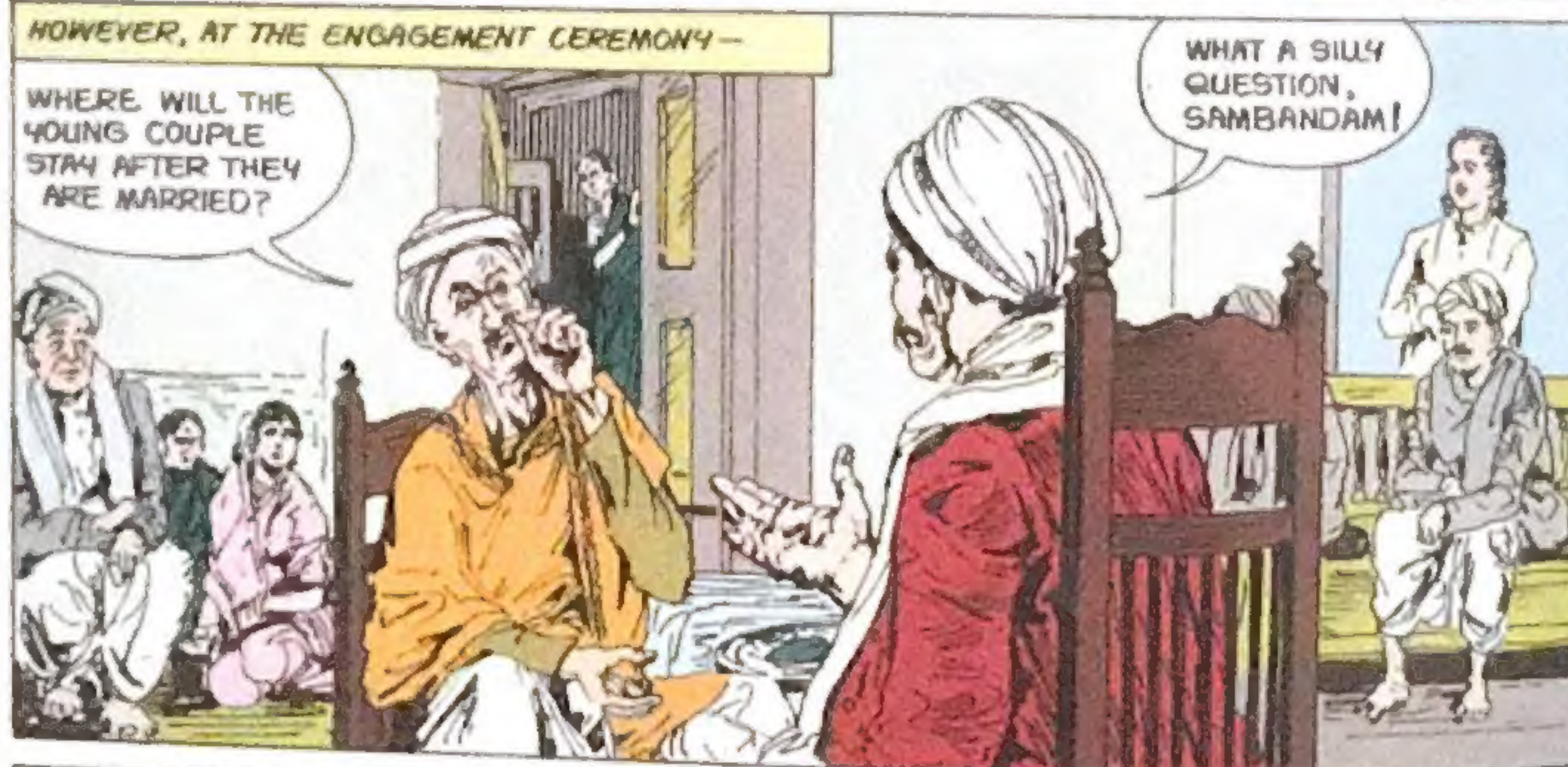




MEANWHILE AT JNANAM'S HOUSE —



HOWEVER, AT THE ENGAGEMENT CEREMONY —



YOUR FAMILY ACQUIRED THE TITLE OF PRABHU ONLY DURING YOUR FATHER'S TIME. MY FAMILY ACQUIRED IT...



... WHEN MY GRANDFATHER WAS ALIVE.

YOUR GRANDFATHER! WASN'T HE THE SON OF A BARBER?



HOW DARE YOU! YOU ... YOU GRANDSON OF A WASHERMAN!



THEN AN ELDERLY PRABHU STOOD UP IN DISGUST.

NOW, NOW, EVEN COMMONERS WOULD NOT SPEAK LIKE THAT. AND YOU CLAIM TO BE PRABHUS! PAH!



BUT IGNORING HIM, THE TWO PRABHUS WENT RIGHT ON WITH THEIR CHILDISH QUARREL.

I WILL GIVE MY DAUGHTER TO A DOG BUT NOT TO YOUR SON.



I WILL ACCEPT EVEN A FROG FOR A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. BUT NOT YOUR DAUGHTER.



AND THAT WAS THE END OF THE ENGAGEMENT CEREMONY.

PRATAPAN WAS HEARTBROKEN. FOR A WHILE HE WONDERED WHAT HE SHOULD DO. AT LAST HE DECIDED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY OUT FOR THEM.



THE TWO OF US WILL RUN AWAY FROM HOME AND GET MARRIED.

HE WROTE A LETTER TO JNANAM ABOUT IT.



I AM SURE SHE WILL AGREE

BUT JNANAM HAD HER OWN VIEWS ON THE MATTER.



WHAT YOU SUGGEST GOES AGAINST MY GRAIN. I WILL NOT MARRY ANYONE WITHOUT MY PARENTS' CONSENT.



IF HOWEVER OUR PARENTS DO NOT RESPECT OUR WISHES, WE ARE FREE TO REMAIN UNMARRIED.



SO JNANAM WON'T MARRY ANYONE ELSE. BUT WILL SHE EVER BE ALLOWED TO MARRY ME?

A FEW MONTHS AFTER PRATAPAN ASKED HIMSELF THAT QUESTION, SAMBANDA MUDALIAR LEFT SATYAPURI WITH HIS FAMILY ON A VISIT TO HIS VILLAGE.



A FEW WEEKS LATER-



AH, JNANAM IS BACK! BUT TO WHAT PURPOSE? THAT SHE IS SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR ONLY SHARPENS MY PAIN.



WHERE IS HER PALANQUIN?



WHERE IS JNANAM? WHERE IS HER PALANQUIN?



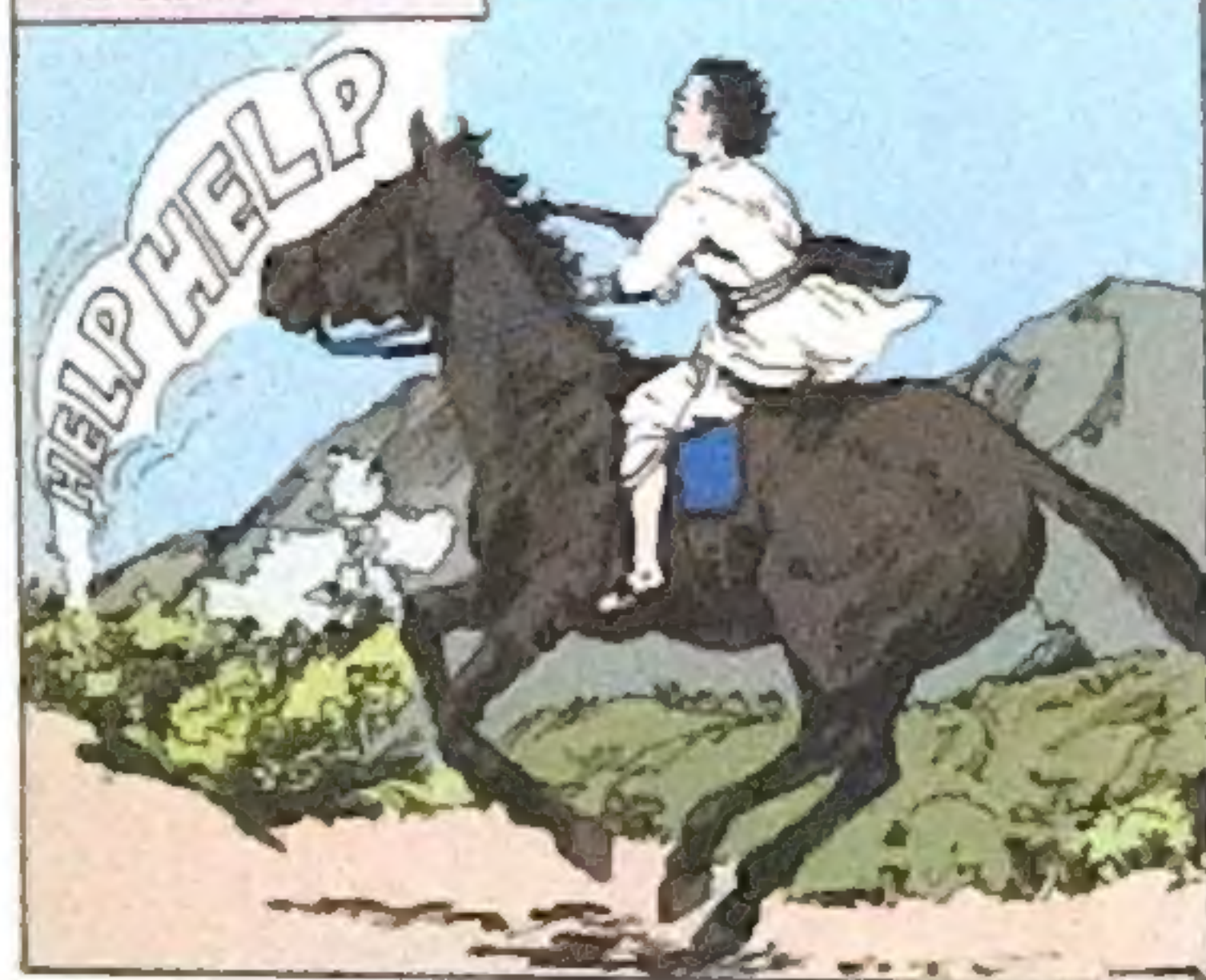
WHAT IS THE MATTER?

SIR, EVERYBODY HAS COME BACK... EXCEPT JNANAM. HER PALANQUIN IS NOT TO BE SEEN.



JNANAM... MISSING... OH, GOD!

PRATAPAN SET OUT IN SEARCH OF JNANAM, ON THE WAY —



SOON —

LEAVE THAT CART ALONE AND...



BEFORE HE COULD FINISH, THE MEN CAME RUSHING AT HIM.



BUT PRATAPAN WAS ALERT.



TWO MEN FELL BUT THE OTHERS RAN AWAY.

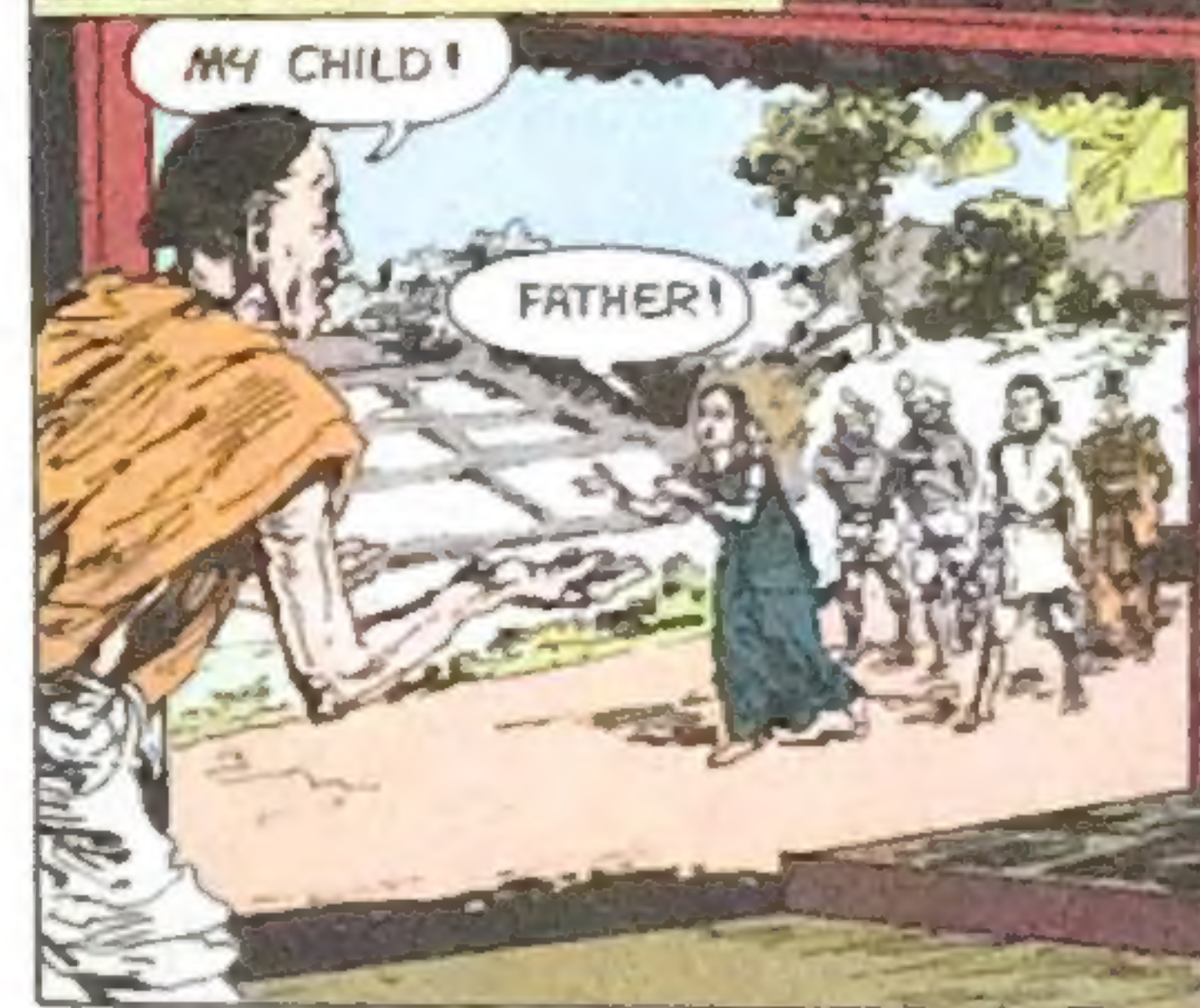


THEN TWO WOMEN CAME OUT OF THE CART.

JNANAM! YOU!



PRATAPAN TOOK JNANAM AND THE TWO BANDITS TO HER PARENTS.



WHO IS BEHIND THIS? TELL US ALL, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE.



WE ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE CHIEF PRABHU OF POONGAVOOR.

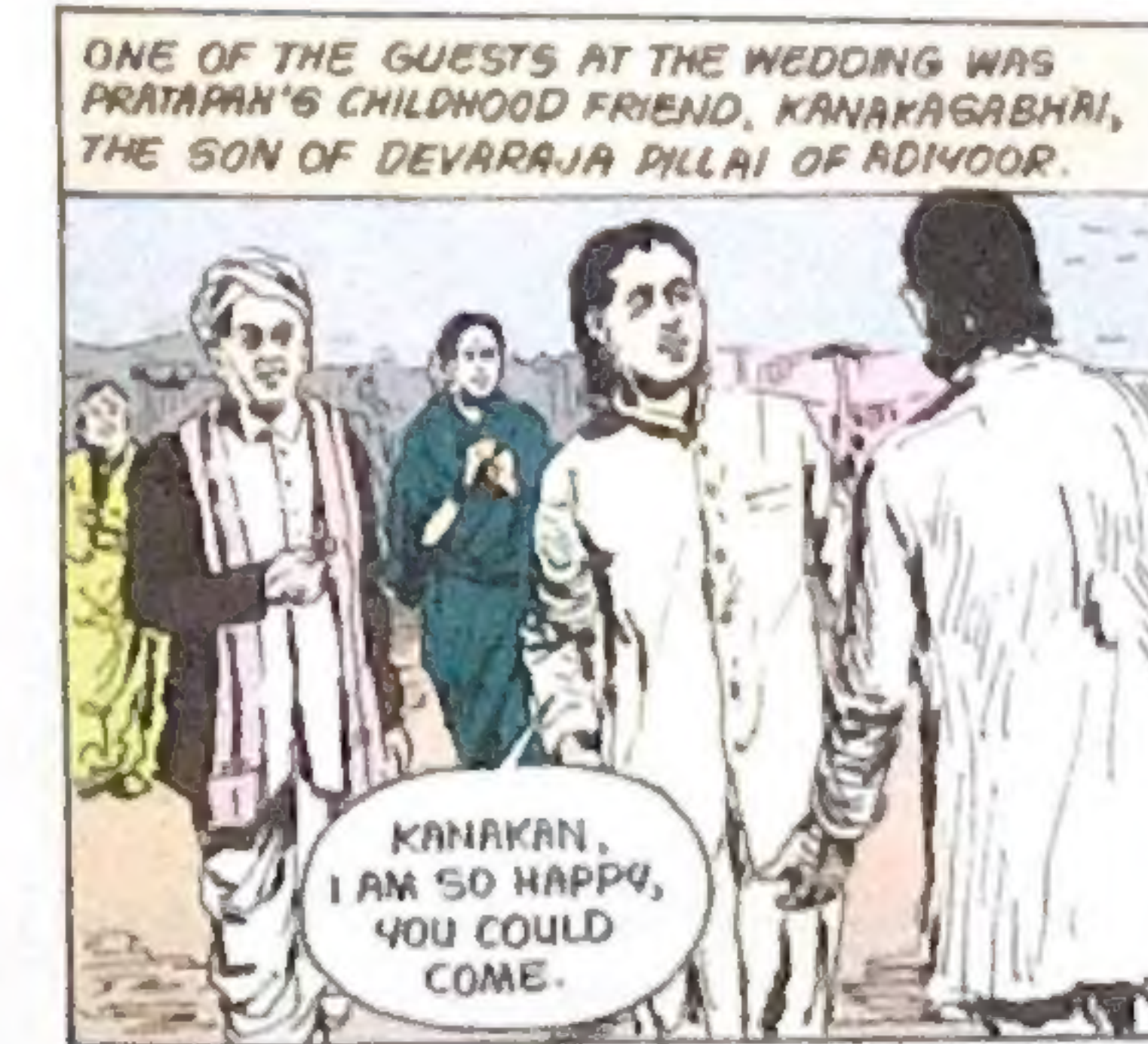
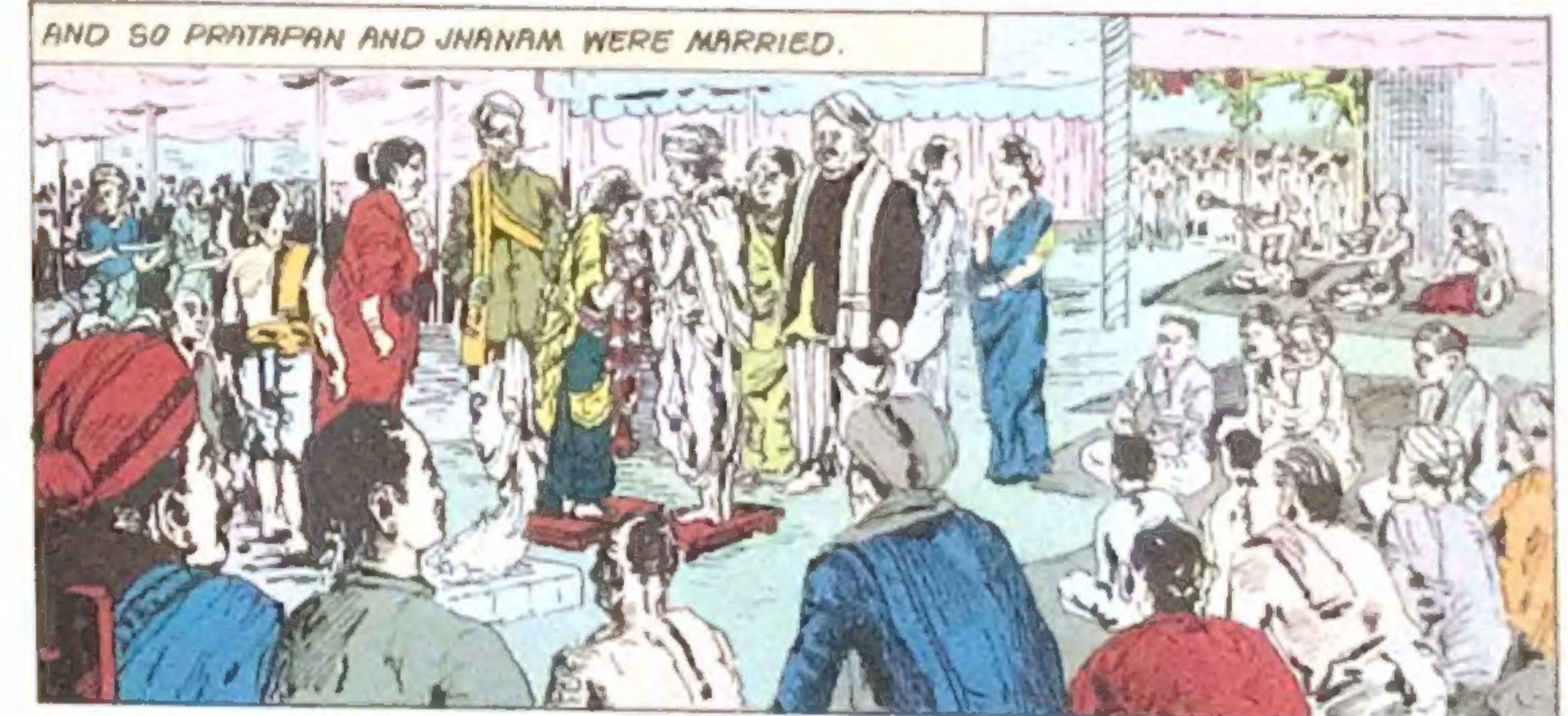
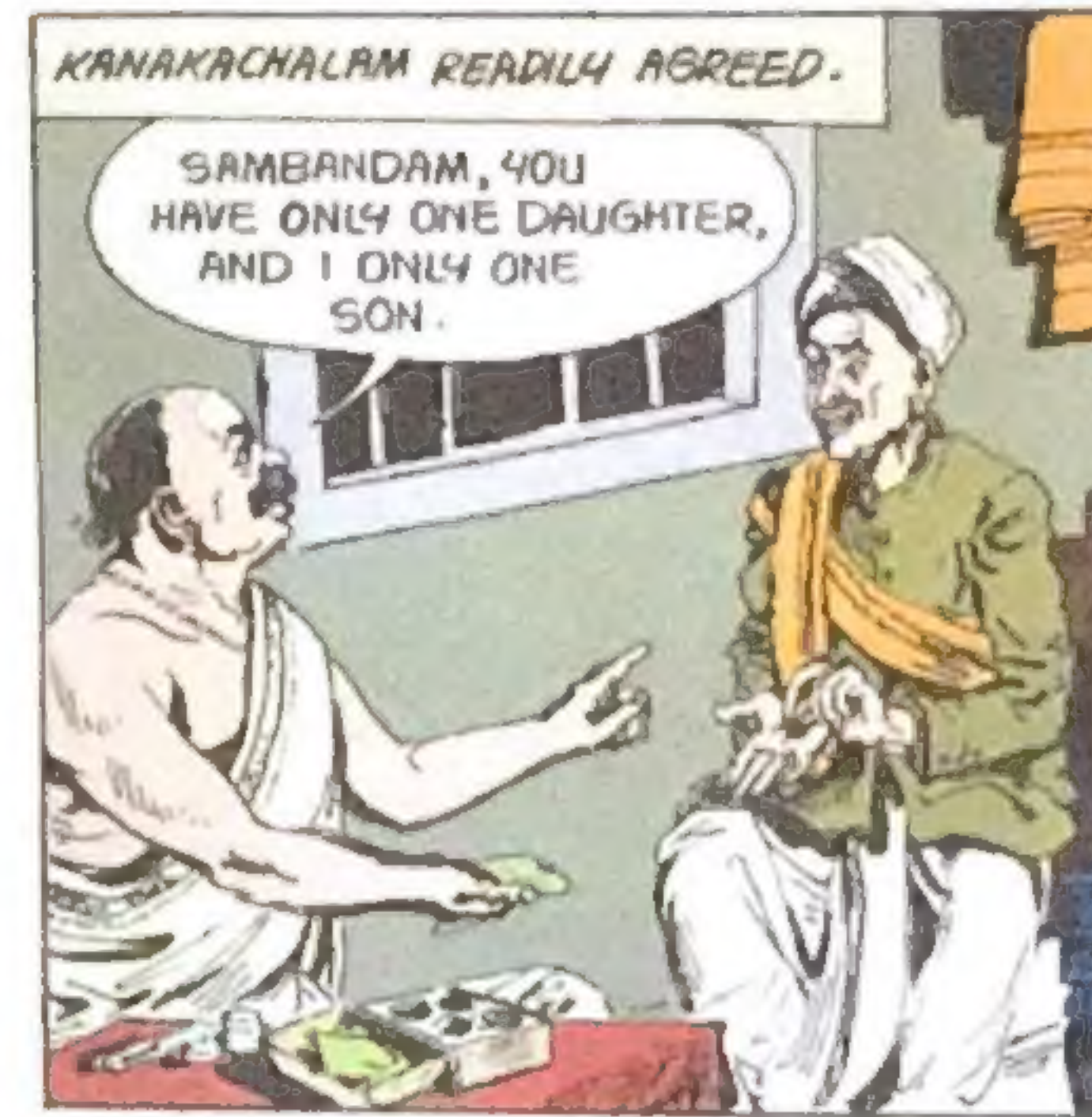
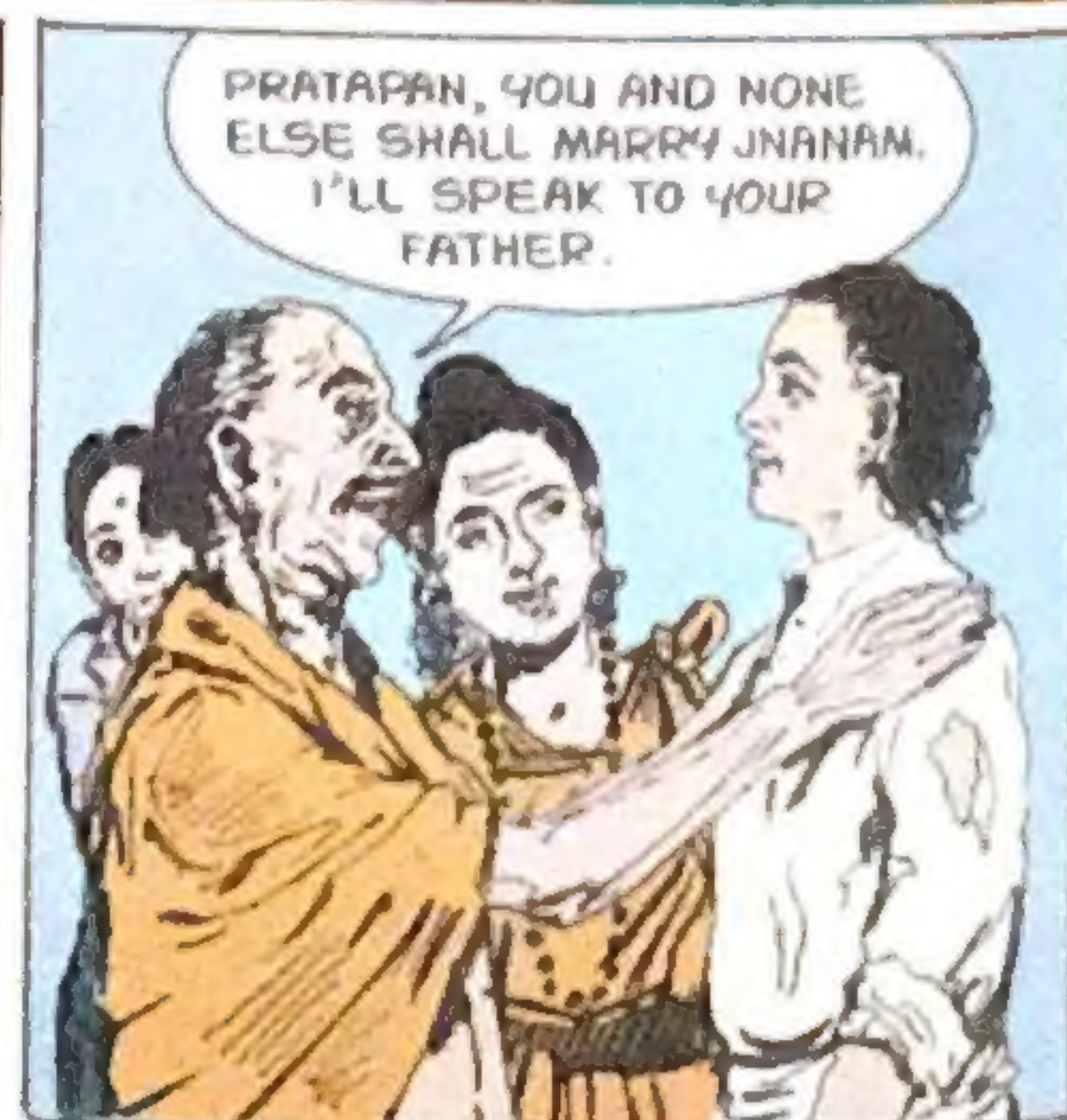
THAT RASCAL WHO WANTED TO MARRY MY PRECIOUS DAUGHTER!

SINCE YOU DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE ANY OF HIS LETTERS, HE ASKED US TO CARRY HER AWAY.

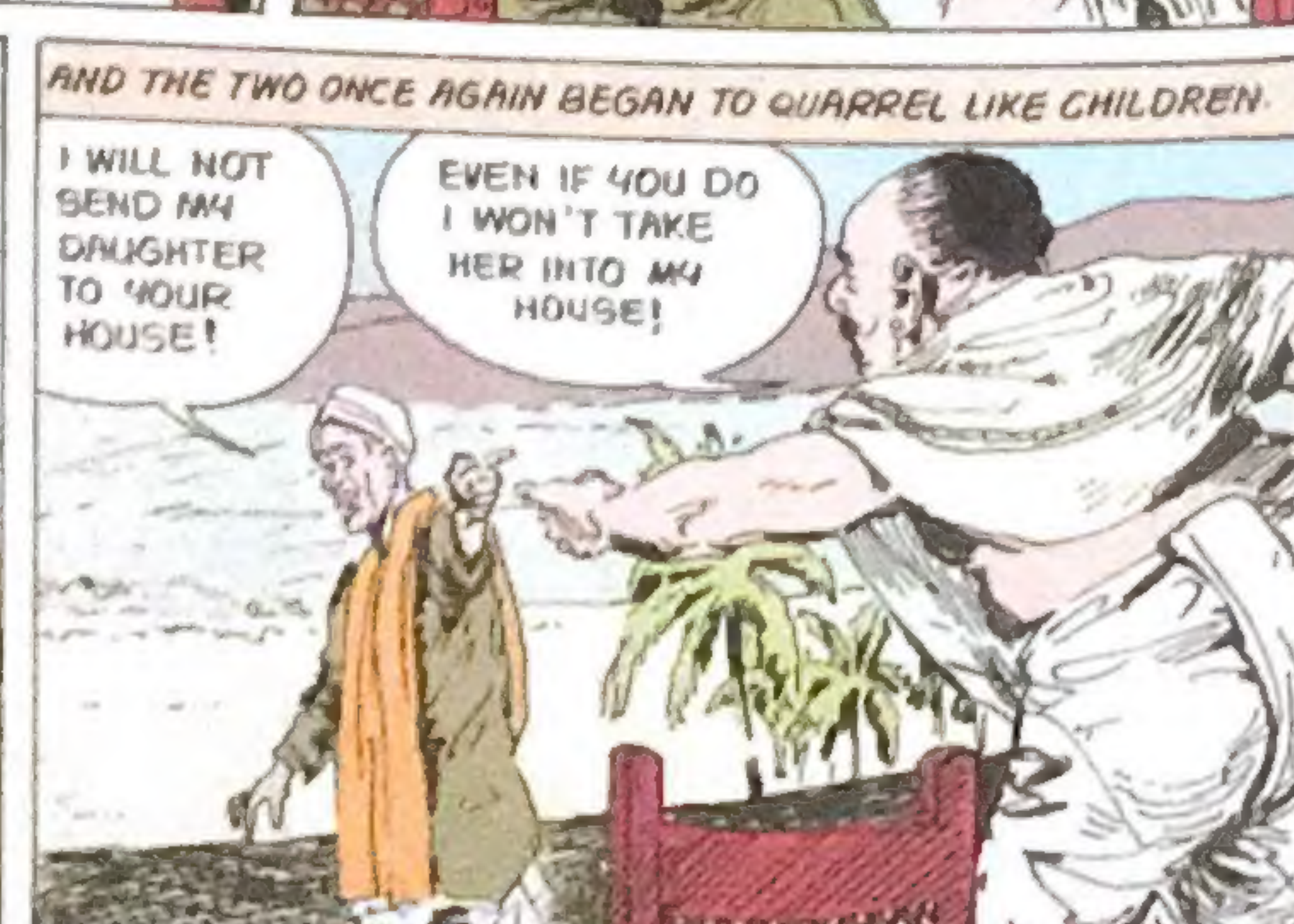
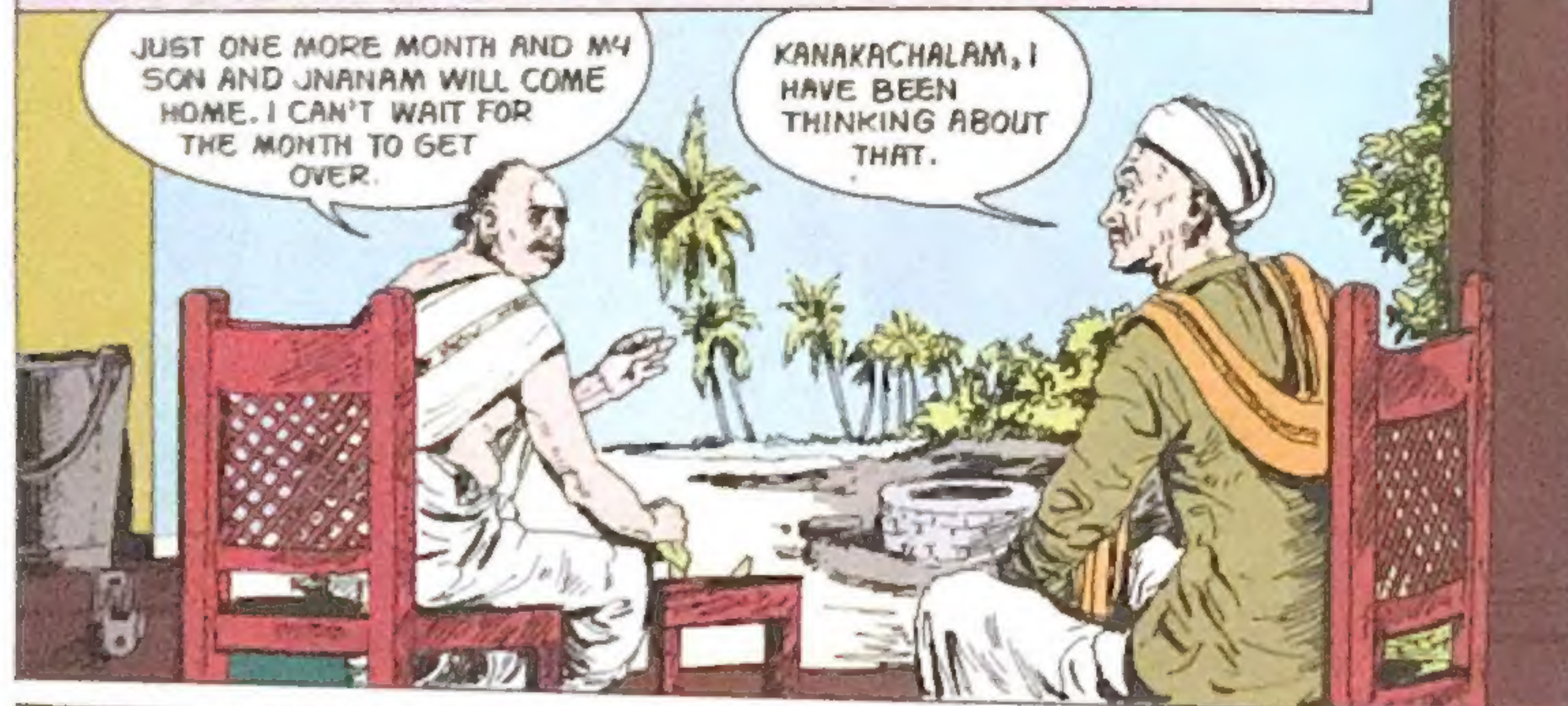


IT WAS FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. SOME MEN TOLD ME THAT MY PALANQUIN WAS READY AND I COULD GET INTO IT. I GOT IN.

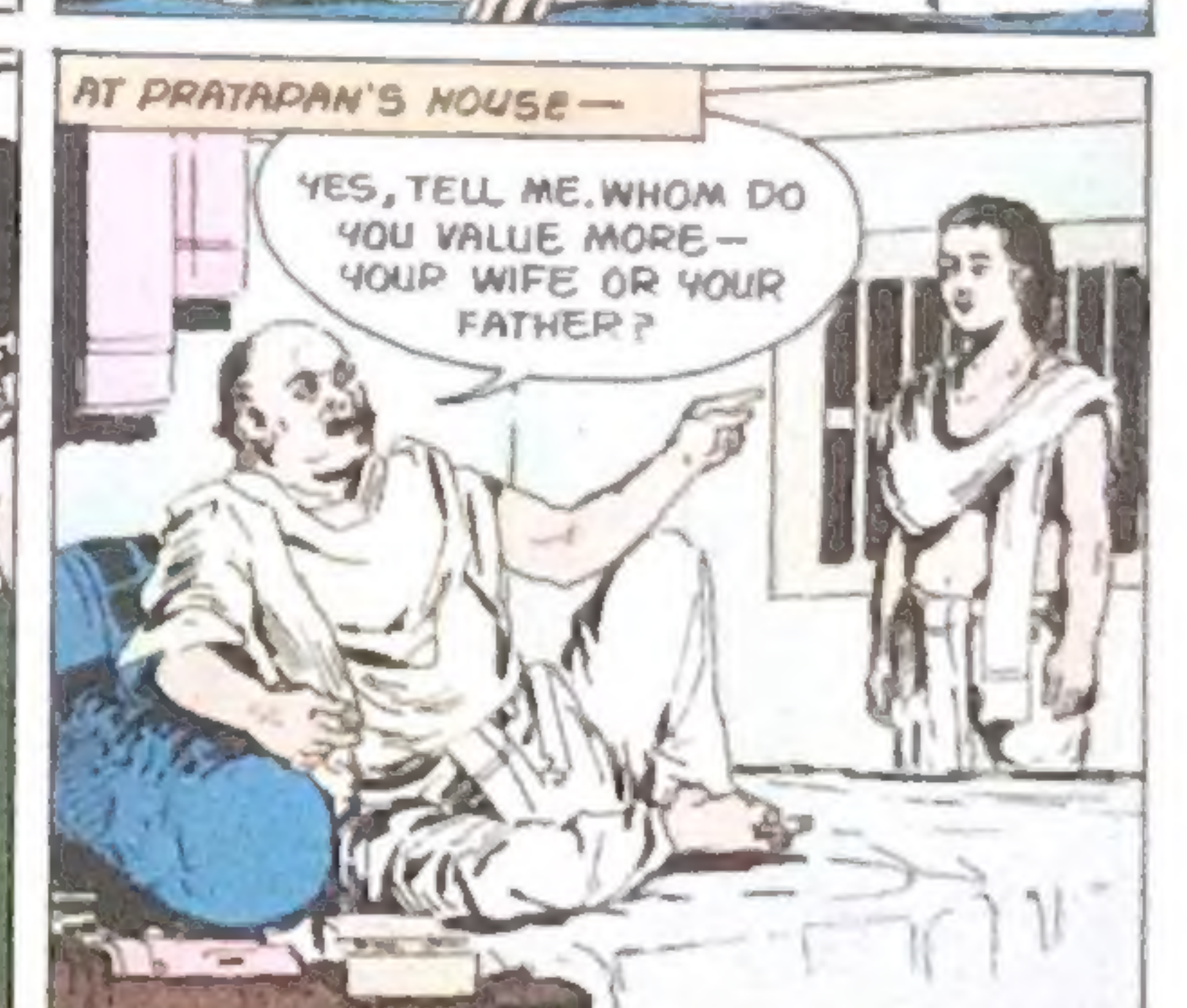
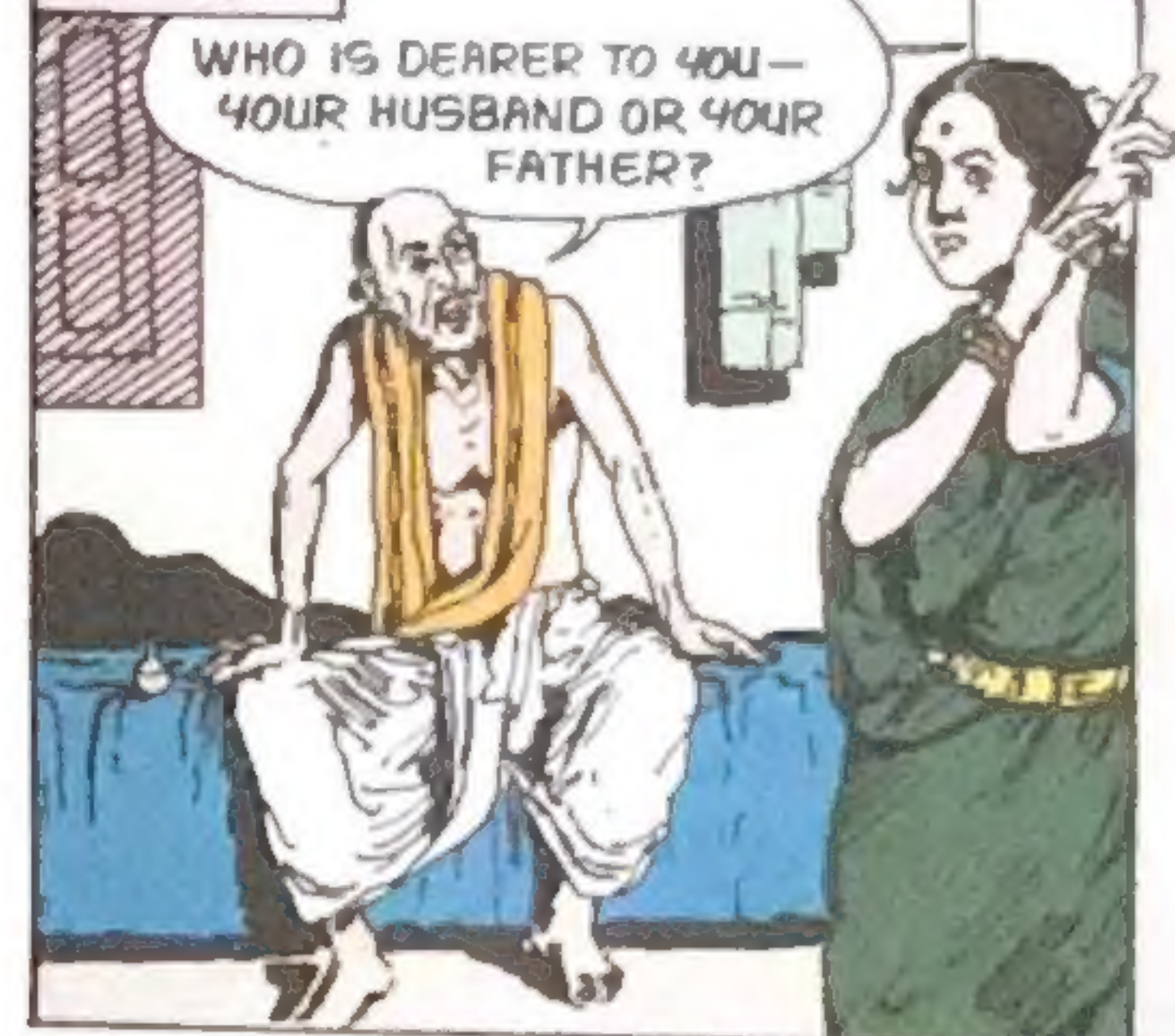




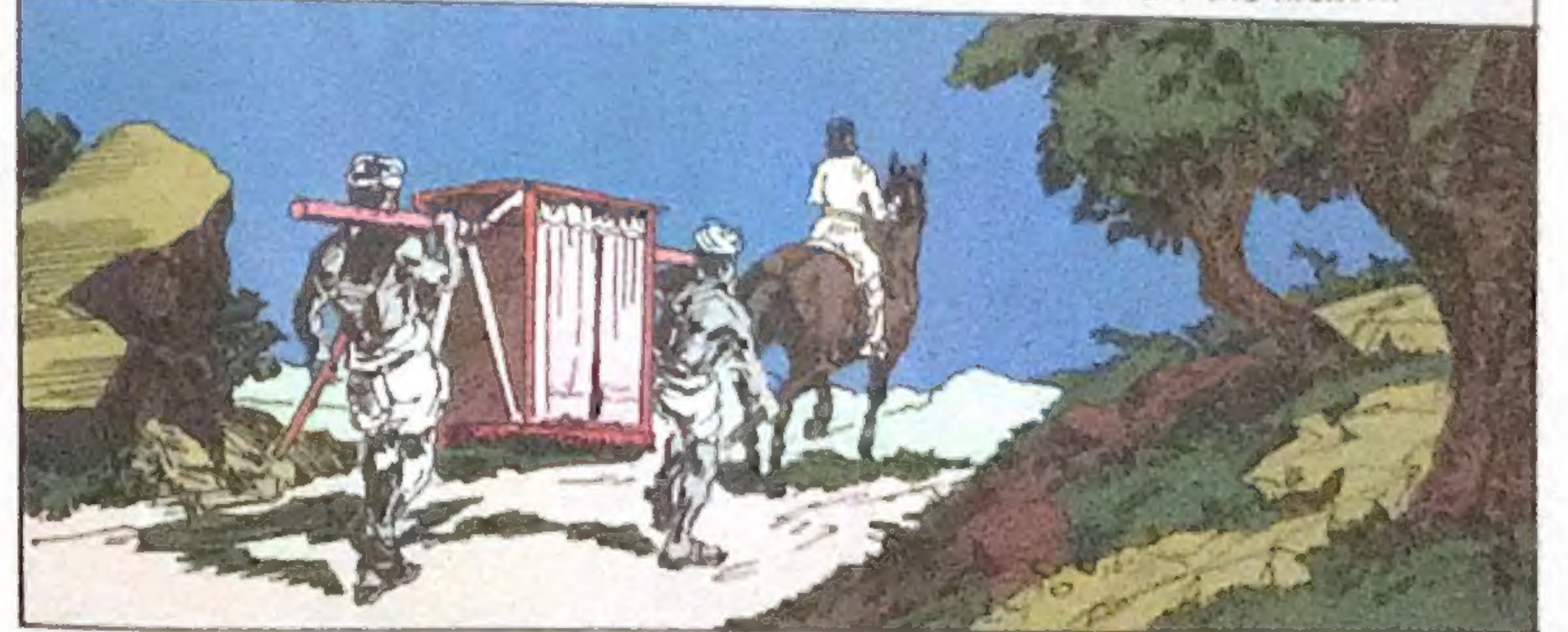
THE YOUNG COUPLE LIVED HAPPILY AT SAMBANDAM'S HOUSE. FIVE MONTHS LATER—

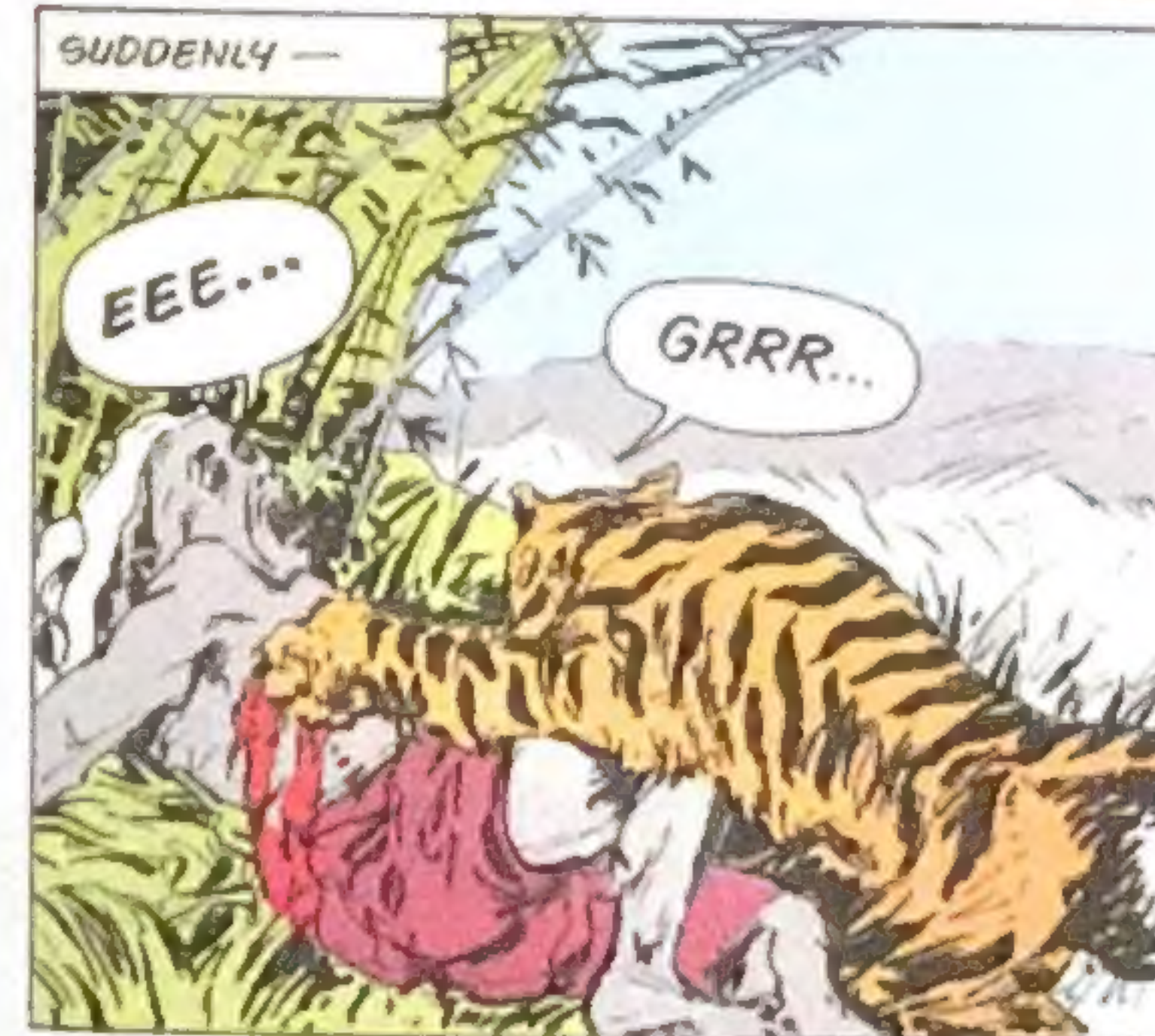
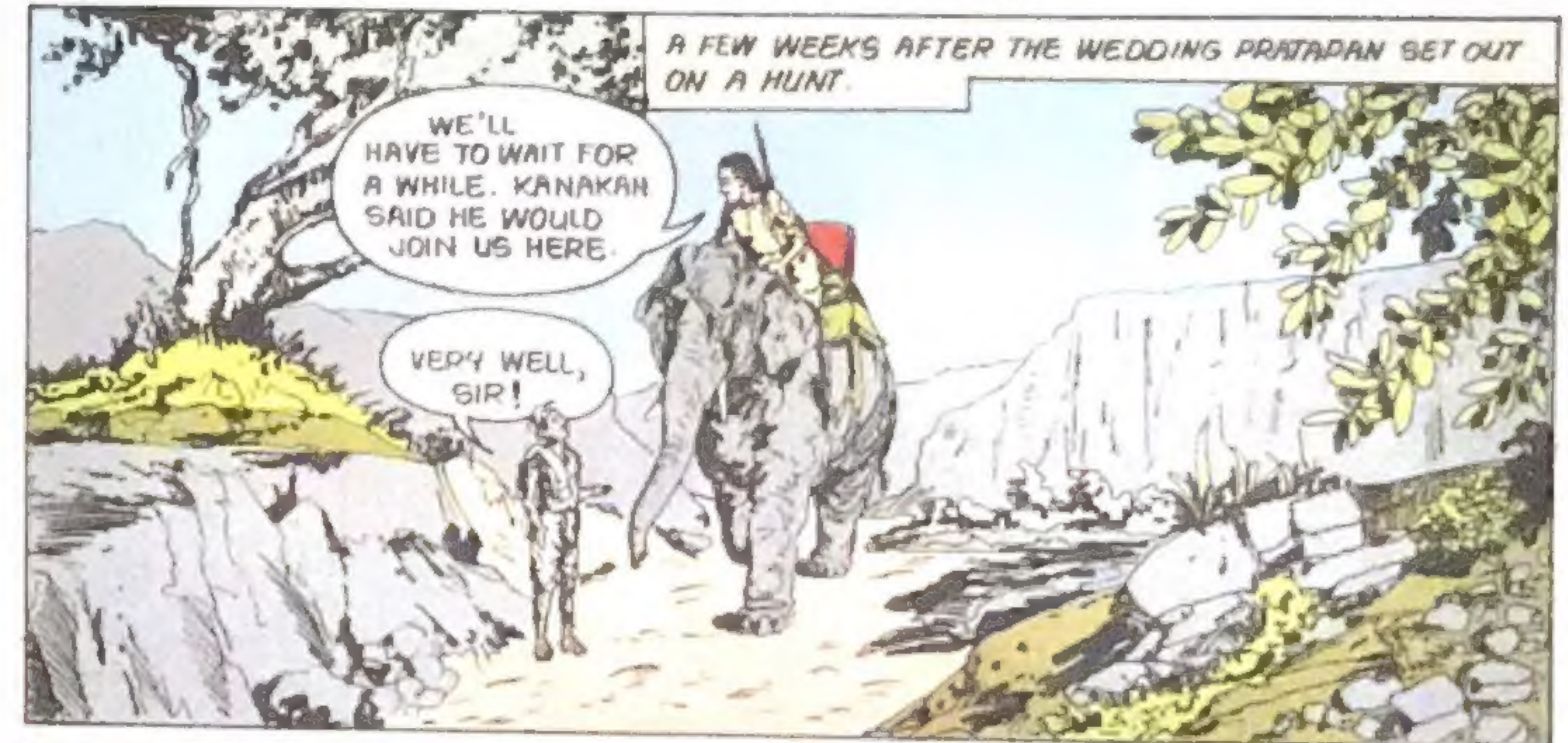
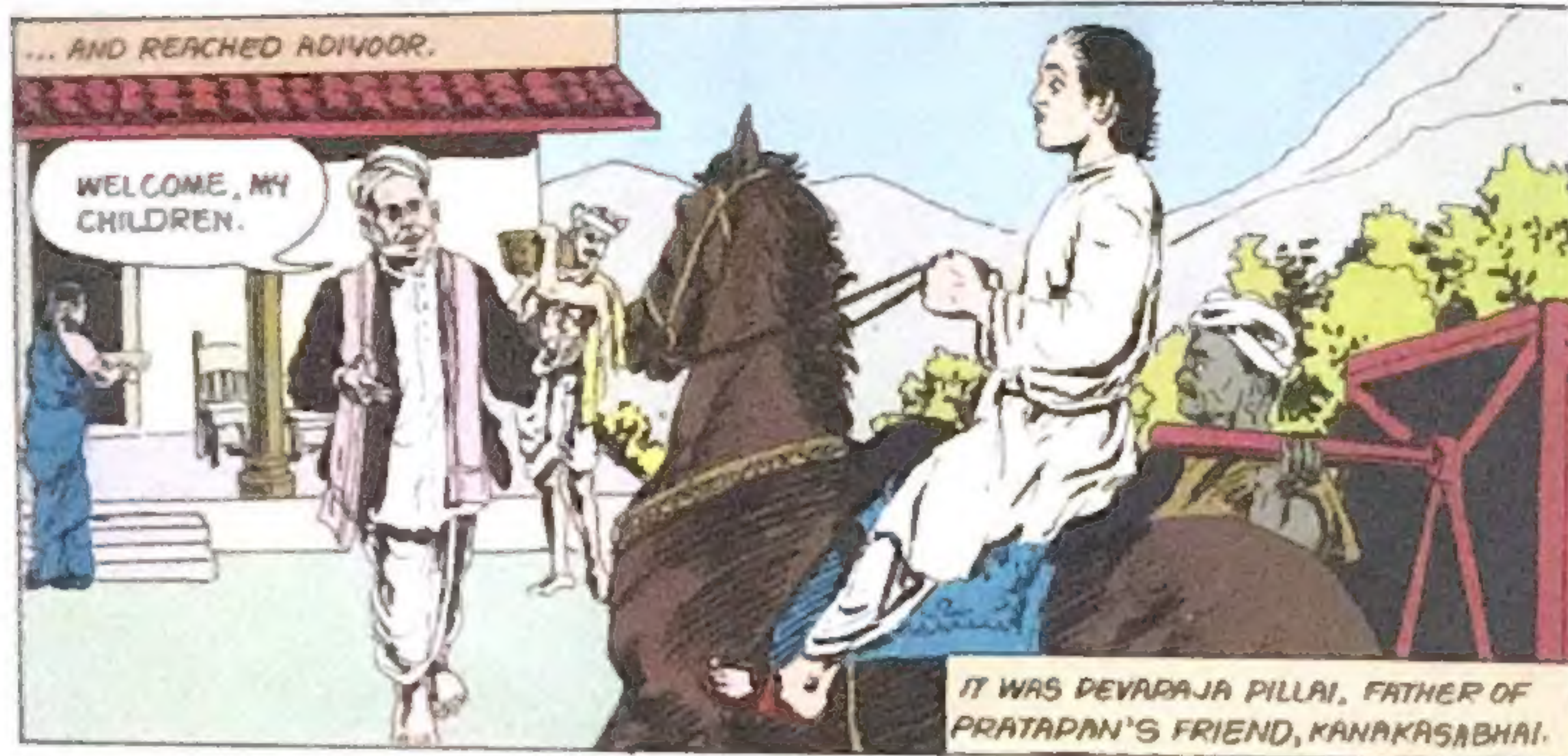


THEY MADE LIFE MISERABLE FOR THE YOUNG COUPLE.



DISGUSTED WITH THE SENSELESS QUARREL, THE YOUNG COUPLE RAN AWAY ONE NIGHT...





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THE ELEPHANT RAN AMUCK FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS.. AND THEN IN HIS FRENZY...



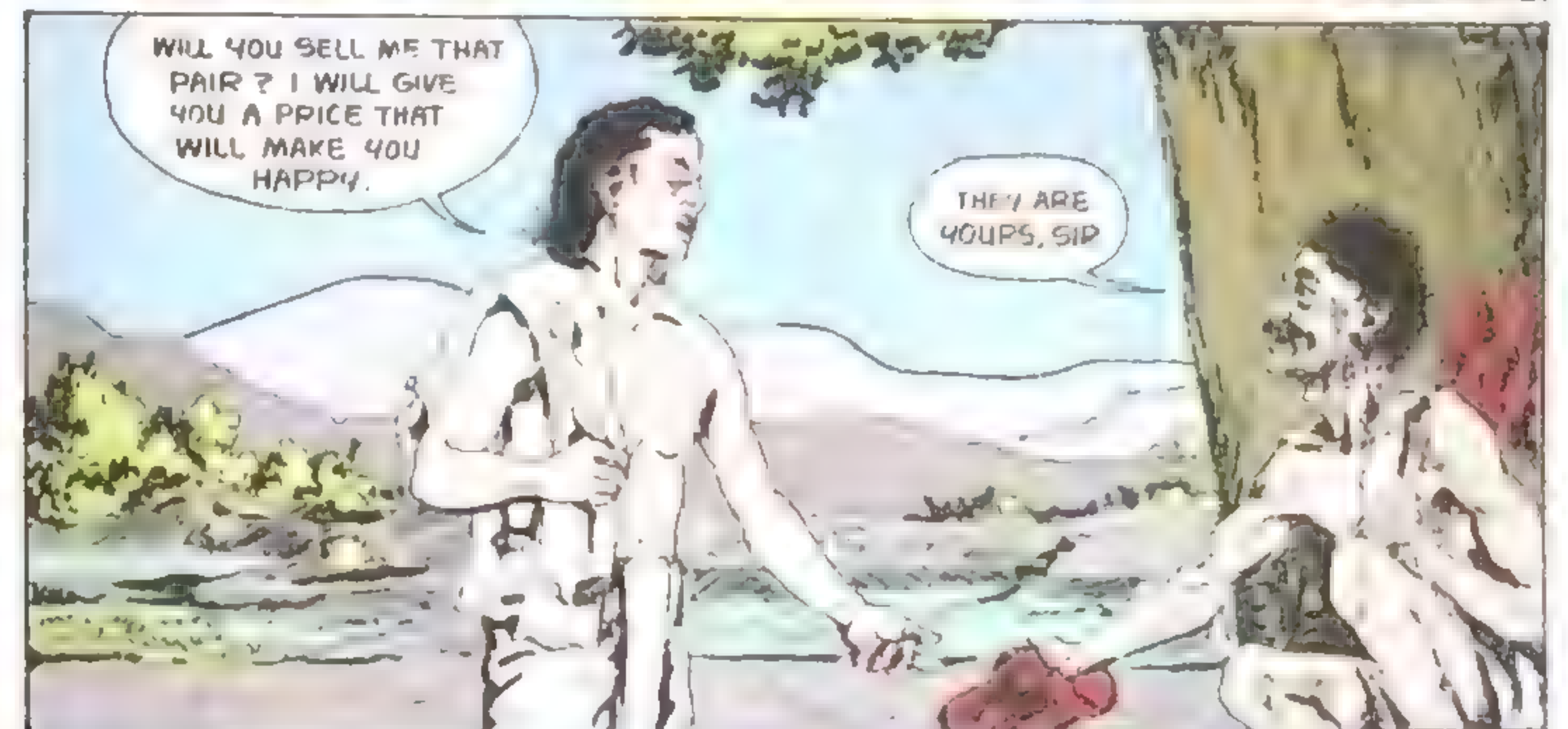
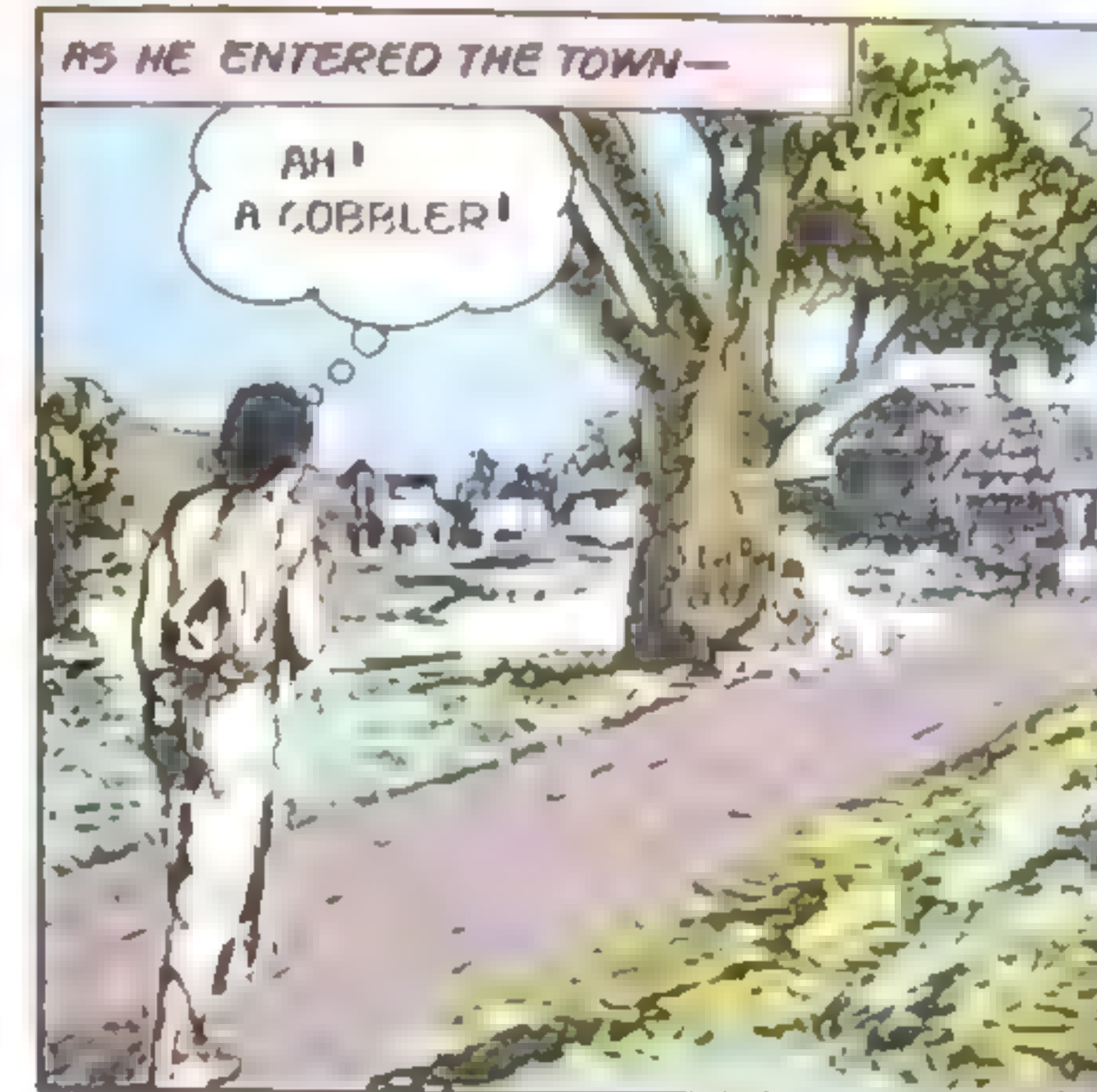
... HE DASHED AGAINST A ROCK...



... AND LUMBERED AWAY.

PRATAPAN HOWEVER HUNG ON TO SOME ROCKS AND HAILED HIMSELF UP.



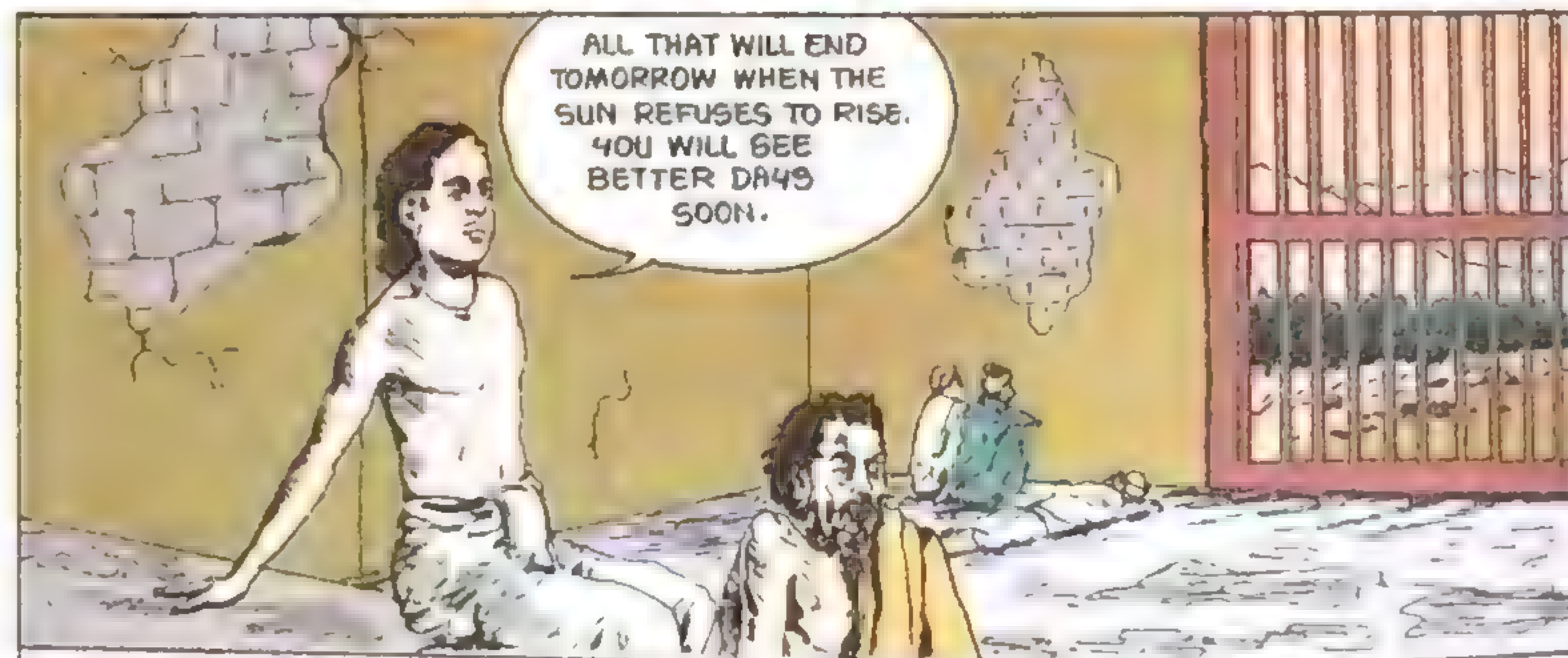
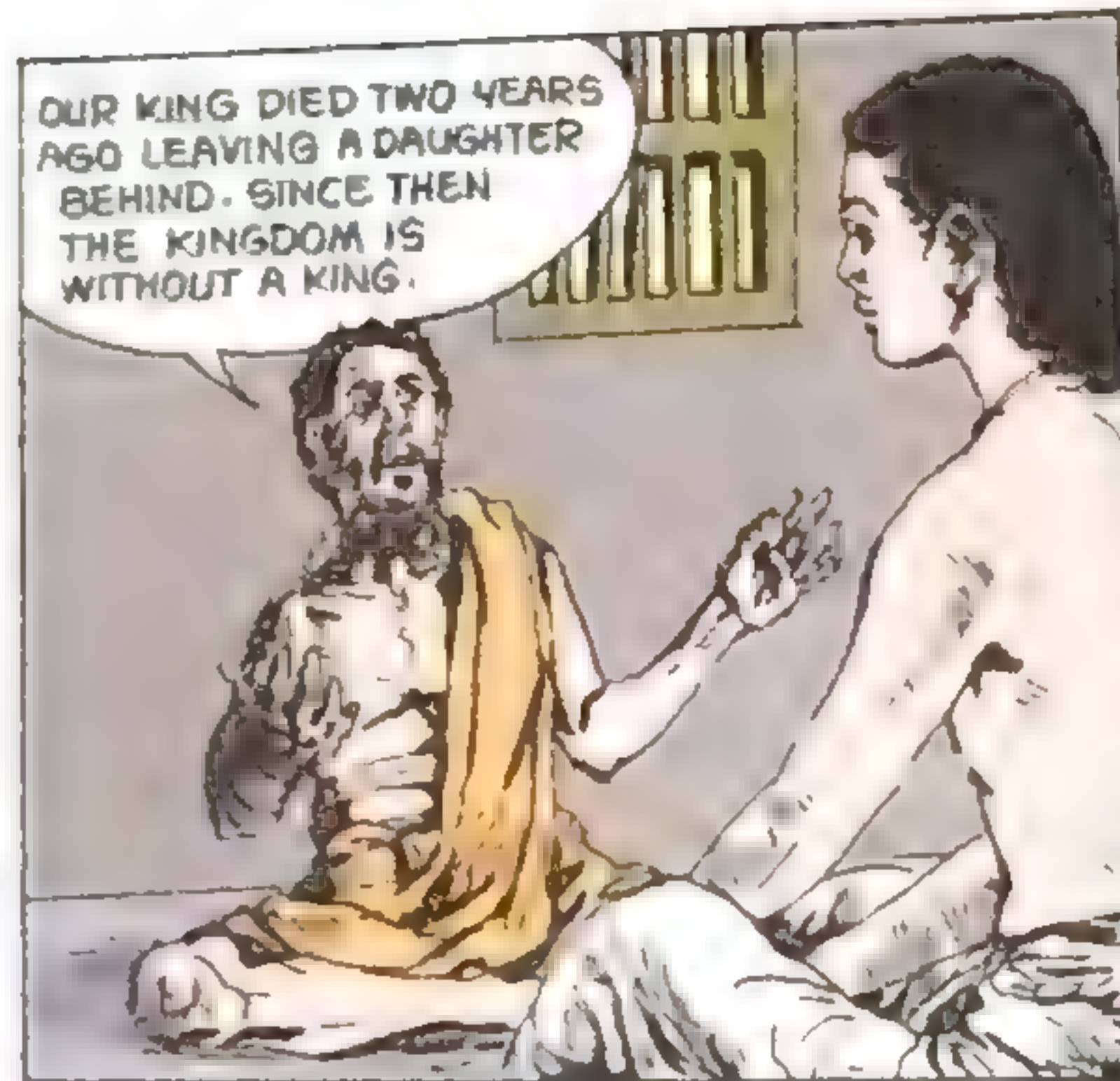


* A RUPEE IN THOSE DAYS COULD BUY SEVERAL PAIRS OF SLIPPERS

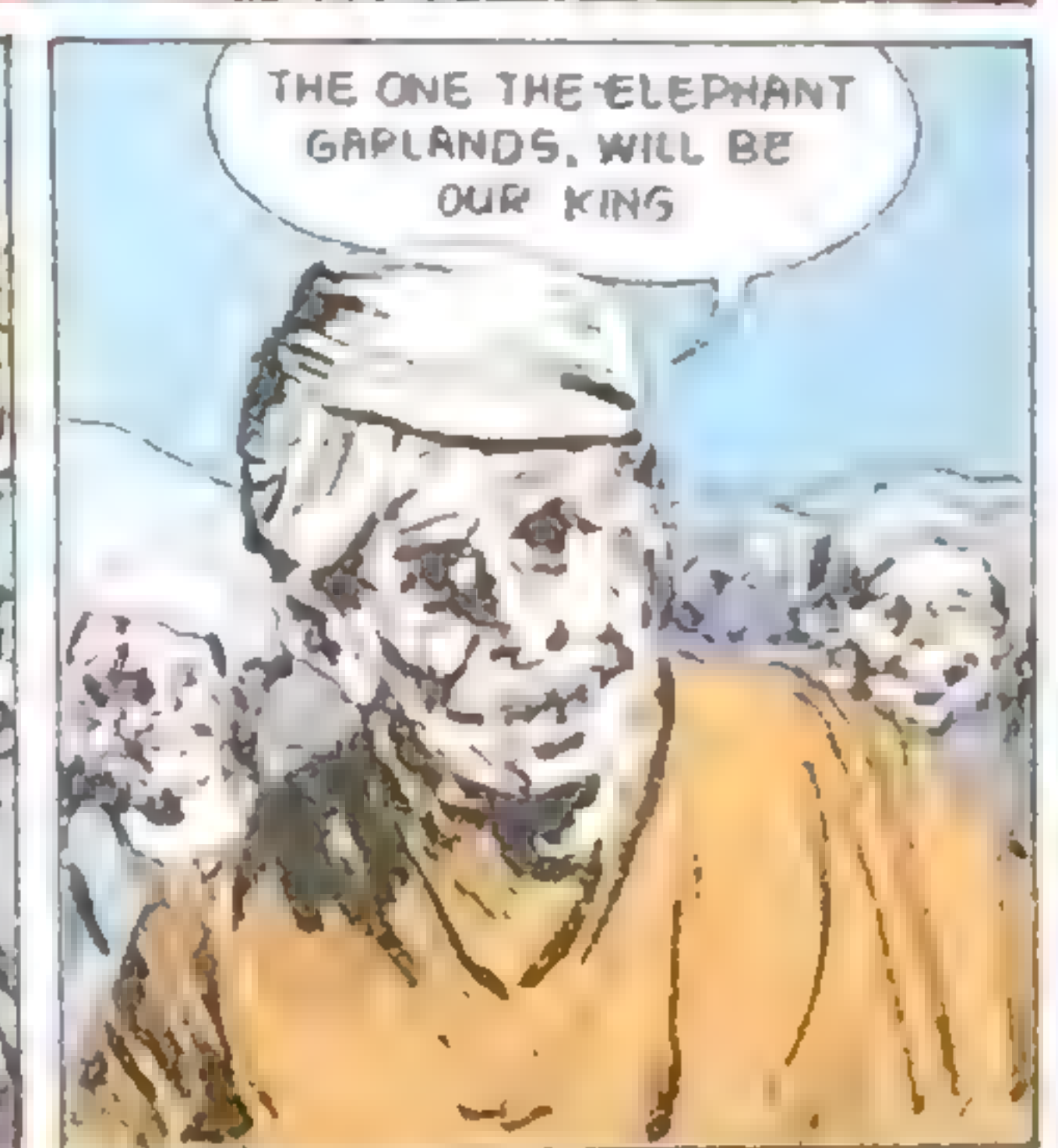
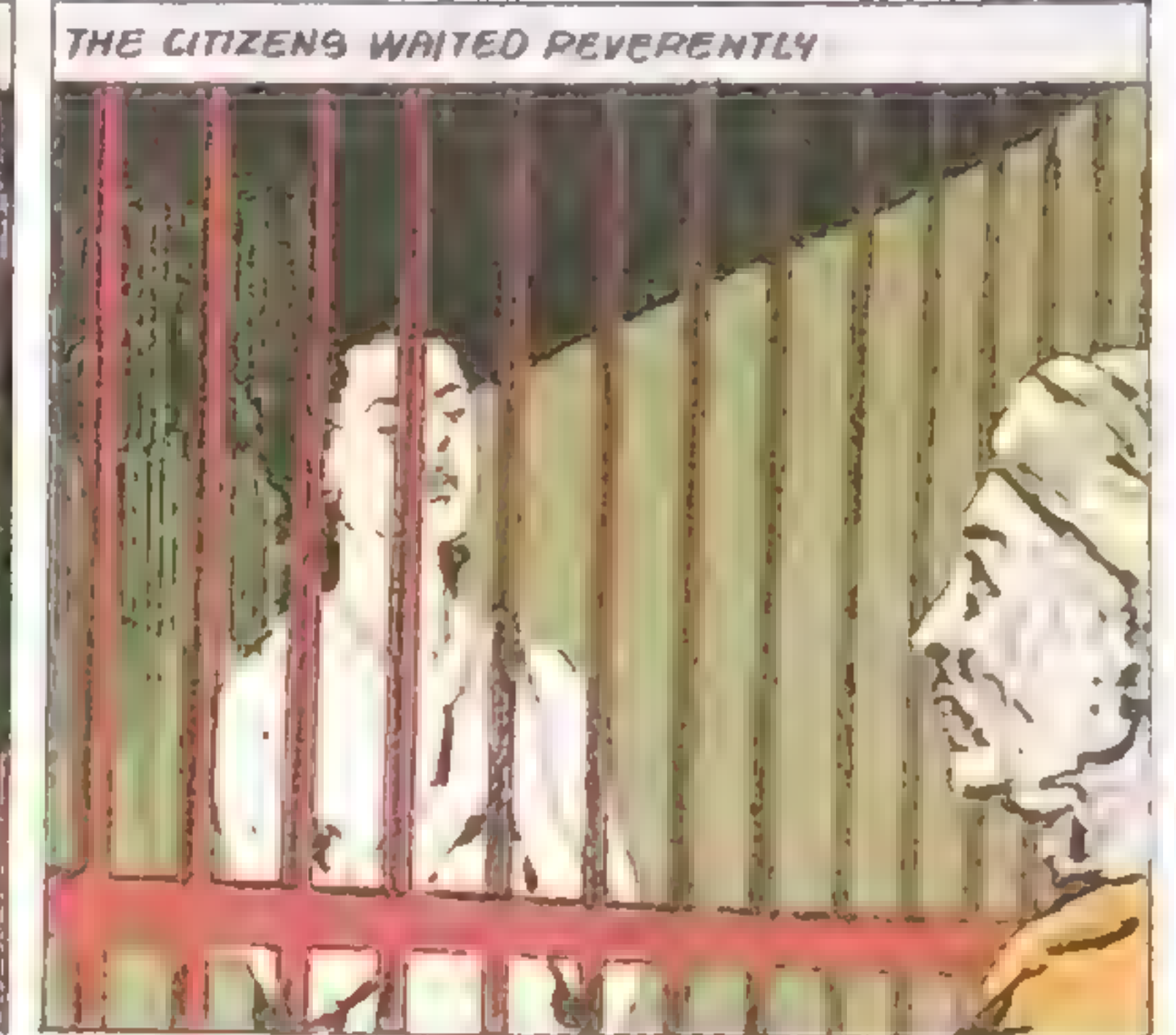
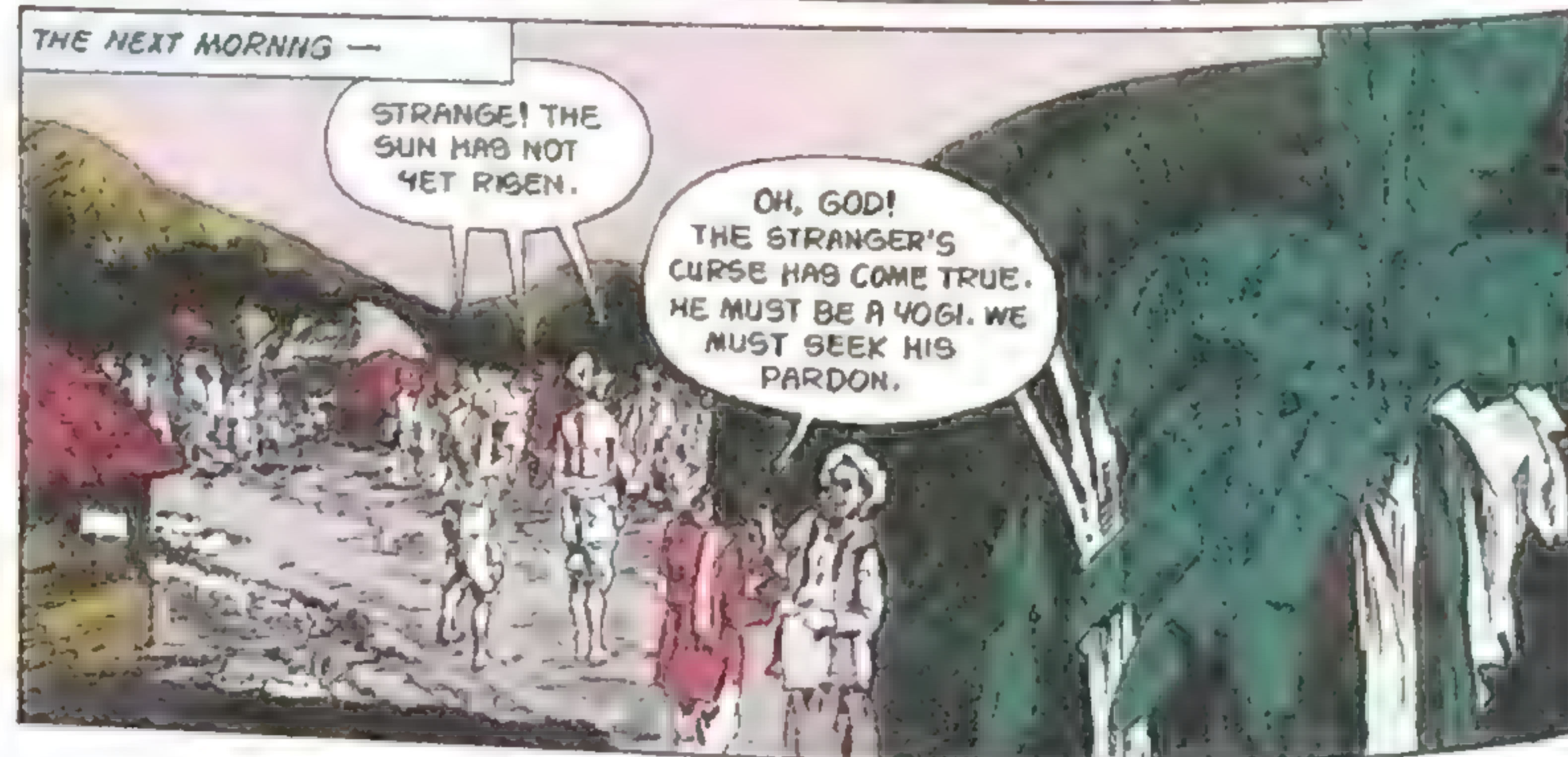


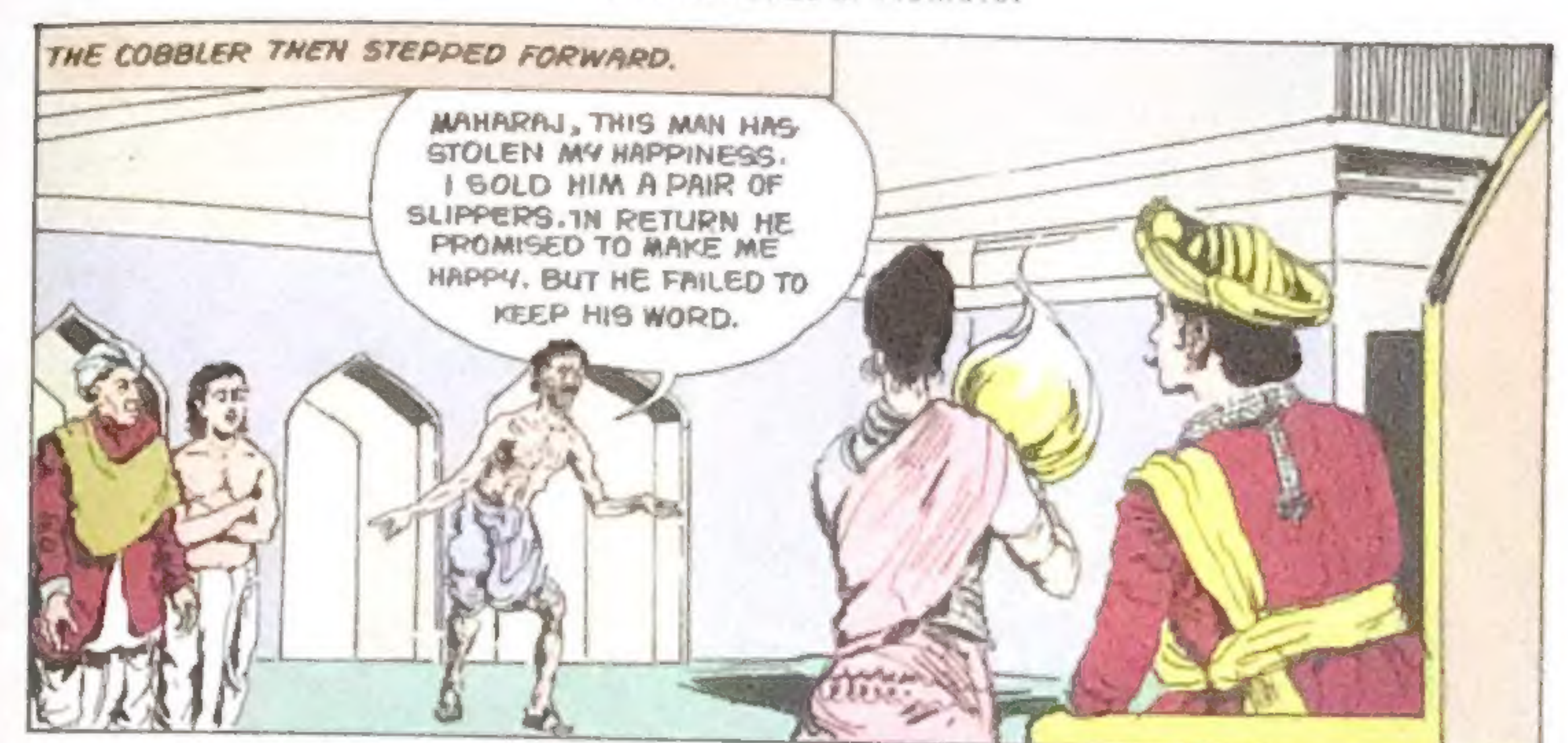
THE COBBLER TOOK PRATAPAN TO COURT. THE JUDGE HEARD THE CASE.





PRATAPAN SPOKE WITH SUCH CONFIDENCE BECAUSE HE KNEW THERE WAS GOING TO BE A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN THE NEXT DAY, STARTING EVEN BEFORE DAWN.





THAT NIGHT AS PRATAPAN SLEPT FITFULLY IN AN OLD CHOUTRY, HE FELT A SOFT HAND TOUCH HIS FOREHEAD.



WHO IS IT?



MAHARAJ!



ARE YOU SURE? TAKE ONE GOOD LOOK AT ME.

JNANAM! YOU!



HOW DID YOU COME HERE? HOW DID YOU BECOME THE KING?

IT'S A LONG STORY.



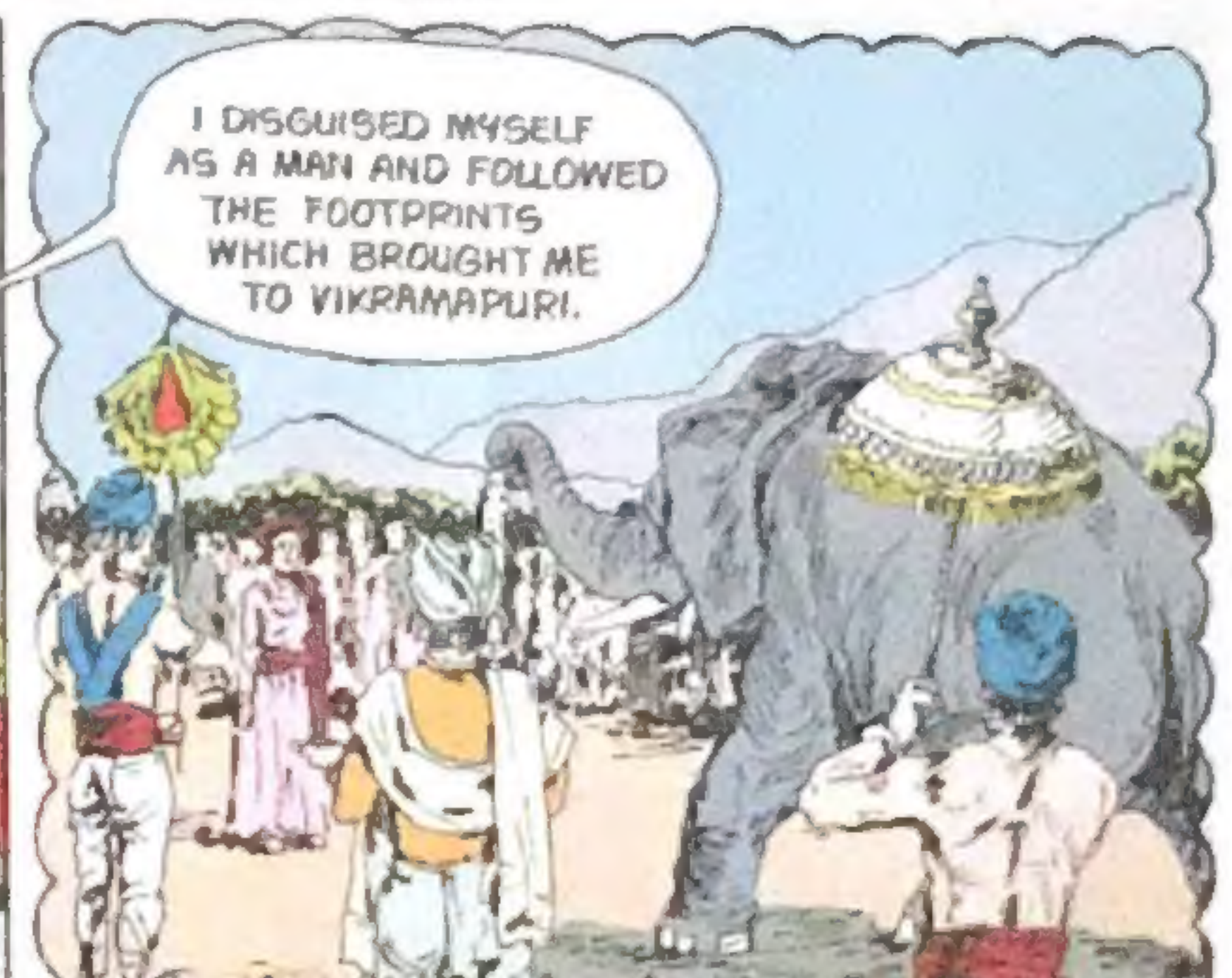
WHEN YOUR ELEPHANT CAME BACK WITHOUT YOU, I WAS WORRIED.



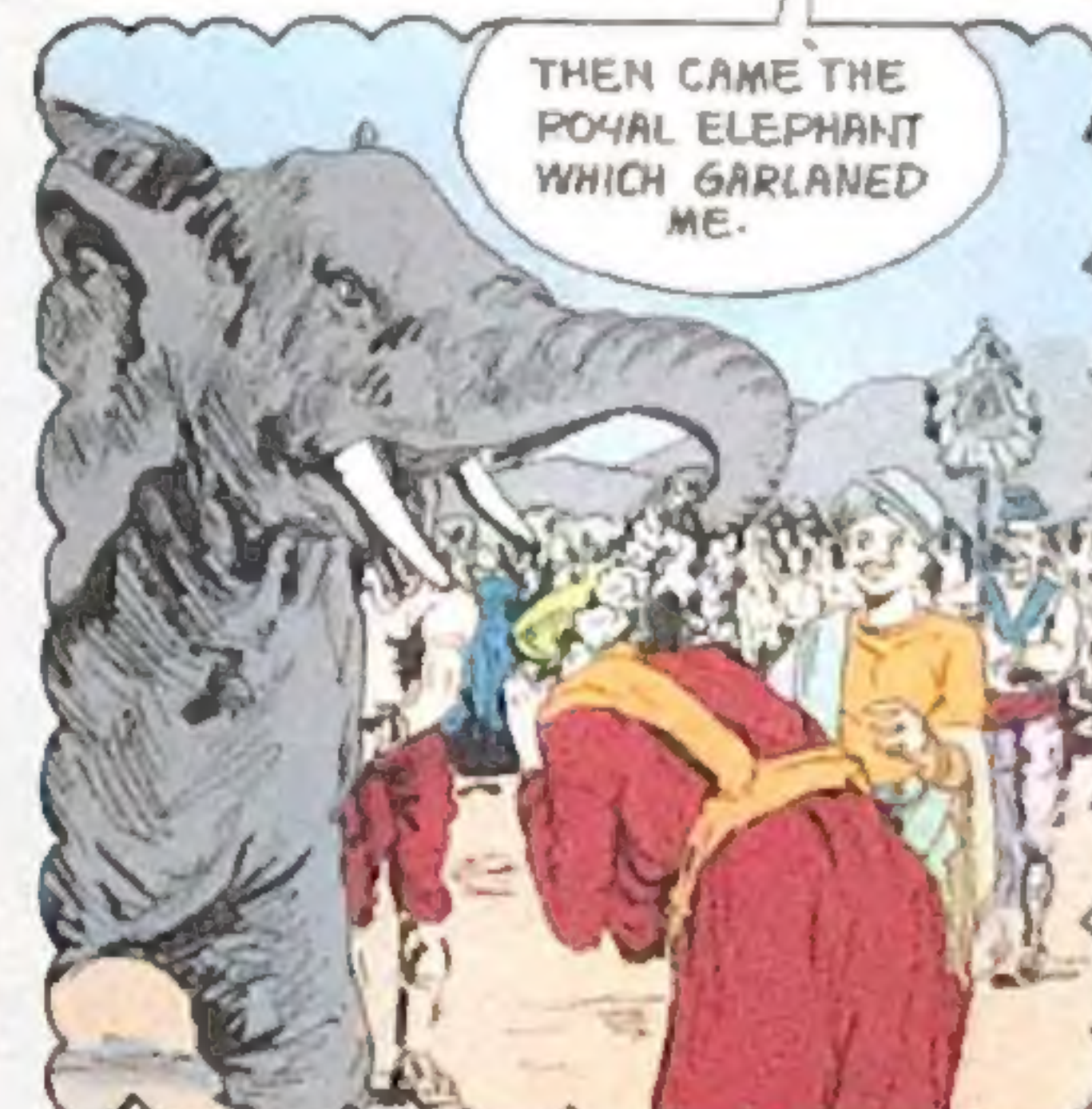
I GOT ONTO HIM AND URGED HIM TO TAKE ME TO YOU.



HE BROUGHT ME TO THE MOUNTAIN WHERE I SAW TORN CLOTHES AND FOOTPRINTS.



I DISGUISED MYSELF AS A MAN AND FOLLOWED THE FOOTPRINTS WHICH BROUGHT ME TO VIKRAMAPURI.



THEN CAME THE ROYAL ELEPHANT WHICH GARLANED ME.



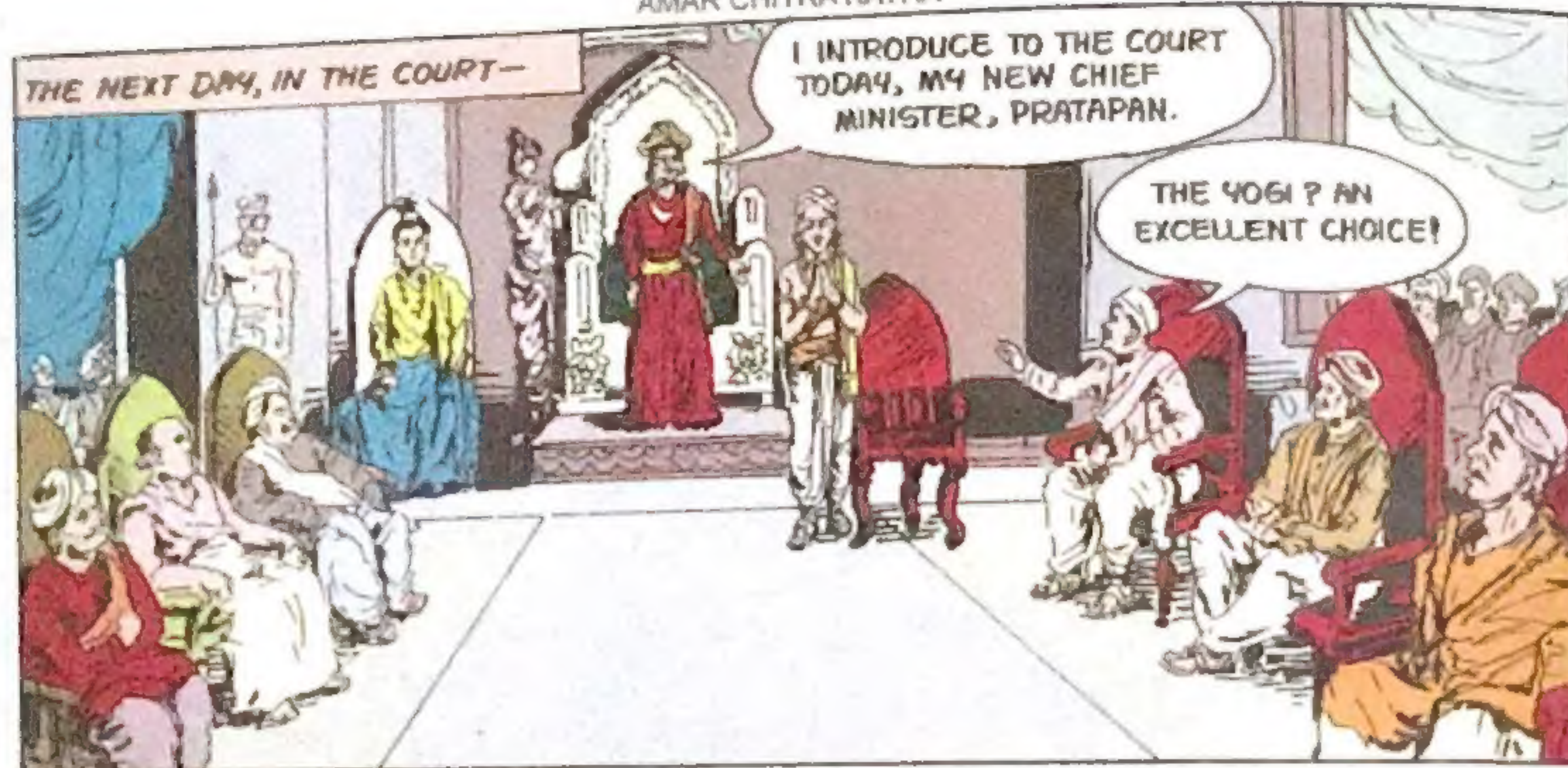
THAT'S HOW I BECAME THE KING OF VIKRAMAPURI.

AND SET ME FREE.



NOW THAT I HAVE FOUND YOU, WE SHALL RETURN TO OUR VILLAGE.

NO DEAR! KNOWING ALL THAT WE DO, WE CANNOT LEAVE VIKRAMAPURI WITHOUT SETTLING ITS AFFAIRS.



JHANAM AND PRATAPAN TOOK MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE.



JHANAM TOOK A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE EDUCATION OF ANANDI, THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE KING.



ONE DAY JHANAM SENT FOR THE COURTIER.



LATER—



THAT NIGHT JHANAM WROTE A LETTER TO ANANDI, REVEALING HER IDENTITY...



IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT, JHANAM AND PRATAPAN LEFT VIKRAMAPURI...



... AND A WEEK LATER, REACHED SATYAPURI.



CHILDREN!

THE FOLLOWING DAY JNANAM HAD A VISITOR.



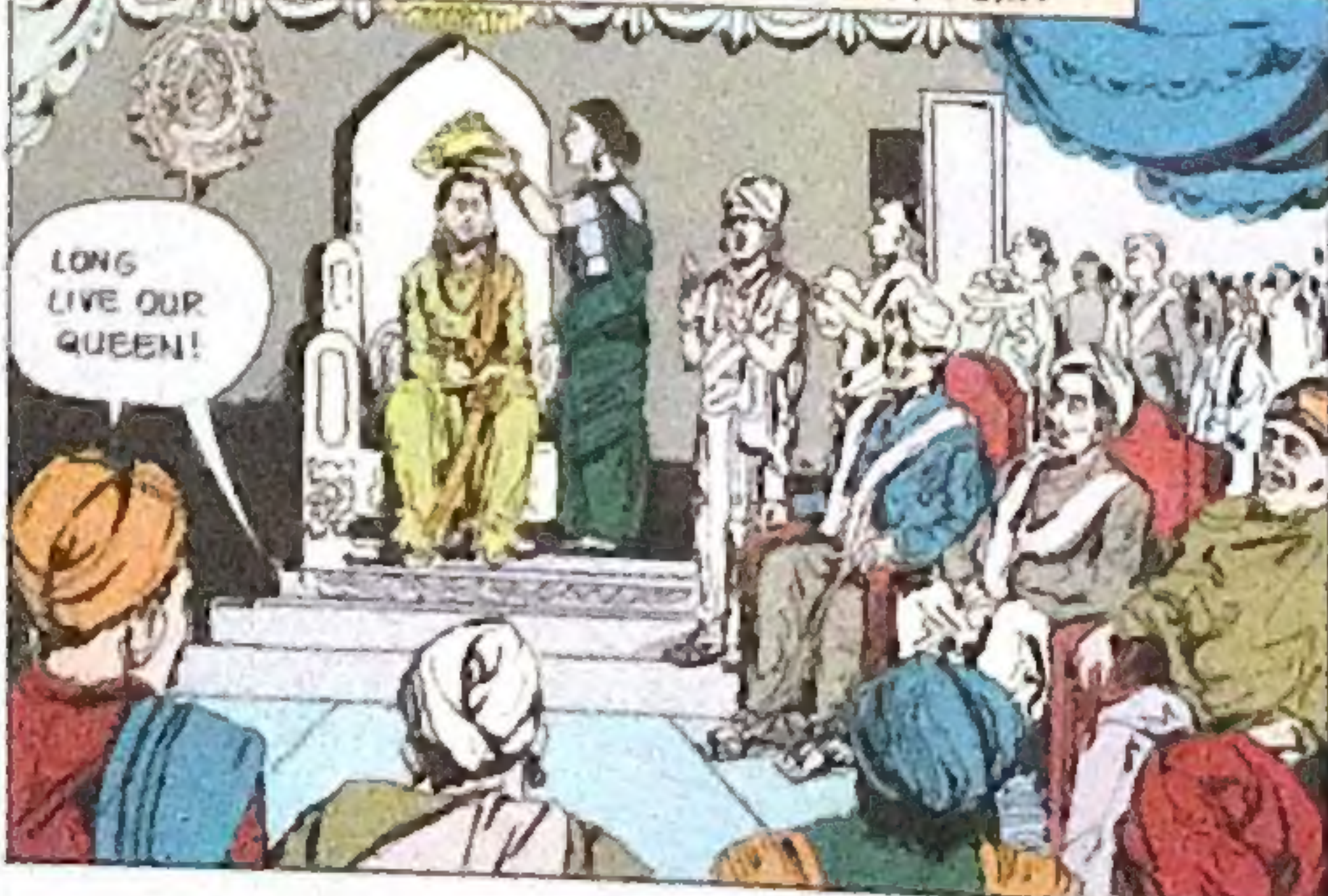
ANANDI!

YOU ARE LIKE MY SISTER. I HAVE NEITHER A FATHER NOR A MOTHER. PLEASE COME AND BLESS ME ON MY CORONATION DAY.

WE SHALL COME!



PRATAPAN AND JNANAM REACHED VIKRAMAPURI FOR THE CORONATION. AMIDST LOUD CRIES OF JOY JNANAM CROWNED ANANDI QUEEN OF VIKRAMAPURI.



LONG LIVE OUR QUEEN!



OUR BLESSINGS AND GOOD WISHES, MY DEAR GIRL.

WHICH OF THE ACKs HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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